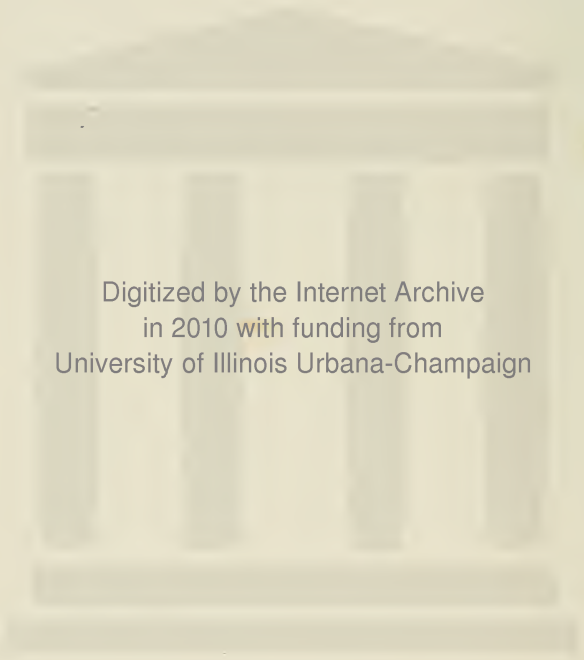


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JAMES WOODFORD,

*CARPENTER AND CHARTIST.*

BY

HENRY SOLLY,

AUTHOR OF "WORKING MENS' CLUBS AND INSTITUTES," "THE  
SHEPHERD'S DREAM," "GONZAGA: A TALE OF FLORENCE,"  
ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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# JAMES WOODFORD, CARPENTER AND CHARTIST.

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## CHAPTER I.

MAGGIE THATCHER didn't see much of her lover for some days after this occurrence, as might be expected, and Kitty Barber met him, as usual, more than was at all desirable. Maggie tried to carry off her own unhappiness with a high hand, but with all her wisdom and strength and self-sufficiency, she was a true woman; and it was intensely painful to her to see how she had repelled this strange, impulsive, noble-hearted young fellow, who, whatever his faults were, had certainly made her, now and then, happier than anybody else had ever done, or, as she believed, ever could; but at length one day, poor thing, she

heard from a kind, officious neighbour a great deal about Davie and Kitty being seen together, which made her at first very angry and then very sad; so when he came next evening she taxed him with "going with that deceitful young minx," whereupon he fired up and swore he didn't care an old rag about Kitty, but loved *her* (Maggie) as much as ever; and then went on to swear he couldn't stand her temper, for all that, and wouldn't, if they gave him 500*l.* to do it. Hereupon, of course, they broke off again, and he started up the lane, while she went dashing about in a blind fury to keep herself from dissolving in tears. Of course, as Davie went up the lane he met Miss Kitty, who generally watched for him only too successfully.

"Come now," said she, "let's sit down, and just tell me why you are so vexed, for I see you are—and I don't like my poor boy should be put upon in this fashion by anybody. I know who has been worriting you."

Well, before very long, poor Maggie had repented of quarrelling, and had come up

the lane to find her provoking lover, and try to make it up with him once and for all. Now it so happened, just before Maggie appeared on the scene, that Puss-in-Boots had been troubled, she said, by a fly getting into one of her languishing eyes. The pain appeared to be considerable, and Davie had, of course, to do his best to extract the offending substance. This done, their lips were inevitably so near together that Maggie came up just in time to see a very hearty kissing match going on between them. She had tried more than once to turn a deaf ear to all the gossip which she had heard, and within the last ten minutes even had persuaded herself that she was foolishly jealous, and must come and ask Davie to forgive her; but now all the reports that had reached her came flashing in upon her like scorching flame. She turned right round, and went back to the cottage without saying a word. The poor girl must have had a bad time of it that night; and when Davie came the next day, she looked

up at him, without leaving her work, full in the face, and just said,—

“Thank you, sir, for calling; but I saw you yesterday kissing in the lane—I did! and now you had better go back to your new love.”

“By Heaven! then I will,” exclaimed her angry lover, “you’re a mean spy!”

“I hate you!” she burst out in ungovernable fury.

“Vixen!” he cried, “you have driven me from you, and this time for ever!” and away he went like a shot.

Not, however, this time to Kitty Barber’s dwelling; he seems to have rushed about the country half the night, then back to his lodgings in town, just in time to receive a letter from a lad, with the word “immediate” written on it, from Mr. Lovett, as Secretary to the Convention. He was in a mad enough mood—angry with himself, with Maggie, and even with Kitty for being so pleasant and captivating; and, in short, there was very fierce strife in Davie Roberts’ heart that long, terrible night

and morning, between good and evil. Weary and wretched, he tore open the letter while the lad waited, found it was a request from the Convention that if he was not yet in work he would go down, with two or three more of the London Chartists, to attend a meeting in Devizes. The letter said that the deputation would be headed by Henry Vincent (this was in April, just before he was locked up at Newport), who had already risen greatly in the estimation of the Chartist body generally, by his remarkable eloquence and impetuous zeal in the cause of the Charter. Roberts caught at this proposal, and at once despatched the lad with his ready acceptance.

The deputation was to start by coach at one o'clock that day, so, having put his head under the pump by way of refreshment, and swallowed a hasty breakfast, he came on to catch me in the breakfast hour. I soon saw something was much amiss, for he seemed to be in a regular taking. When I spoke to him rather soothingly, I little guessed what he had

been doing or what was coming, or I doubt if I could have kept my hands off him ; however, the delay gave me time to feel very sorry for him, whatever it was that had gone wrong. So when he burst out complaining of "that Maggie Thatcher's temper, and that he couldn't put up with it any longer, and had broken with her for ever," I managed to say pretty quietly, though bitterly enough, "Davie Roberts, have you ever thought how much you may have caused all this that you complain of, by your own behaviour?" For I must say I had heard something of his goings on with Kitty from the father and mother when I had last been down at Broadfield. I treated it at the time, for the most part, as idle gossip, and thought perhaps it was no business of mine ; but when he came talking like that, I guessed how it was, and that poor Maggie had been irritated at his behaviour beyond all endurance. I had it on my lips to say to him, "I am afraid, after all, you are only a selfish humbug, and have been treating that girl shame-



fully ;” but I didn’t say it out loud, only turned away and made the observation to the chimney-pots ; but I *did* say, when he went on a little more about her temper, “ Would to God, Roberts, that you had left the girl to me ; I would have taken her and loved her every day of my life, temper and all.” For I was half mad with pain, and sore-hearted enough for two. Roberts opened his eyes pretty wide at this, and didn’t quite know what to make of it. I believe if that moment he could have seen Maggie Thatcher standing before him, and they two by themselves, he would have gone down on his knees, taken her hand, and begged her to forgive him for ever and a day ; but as that could not come about, he only uttered some rough words about her, said I might do as I liked, for she was nothing more to him, told me of the invitation to go down to Devizes, and left me with scarce a shake of the hands, for we neither of us felt, I guess, as if we were to be friends any more.

After Davie was gone I had enough to

think of all the rest of the day, and was very thankful he came to me on a Saturday, when work was soon over, for, try as I would, I couldn't give my mind to it properly. Davie's last words kept ringing in my ears. I couldn't keep them out of my head. In the afternoon, instead of going to Lovett's headquarters, I walked down to Broadfield. As I got out of town, the trees and grass looked beautiful, the birds were singing, and all sorts of strange, wild, blessed fancies would come up in my mind, queerly mingled with sorrow for Davie and his sweetheart, for I knew what trouble they must both be in. Father and mother gave me the old dear welcome, and by and by I heard all that mother knew about the quarrel, and which indeed was already gossip for half the village. I went with them to church on the next morning, but none of the Thatchers used to go; and in the afternoon, while father and mother were dozing in their arm-chairs, and I was thinking whether I should go and try to see Maggie (being drawn in different ways

by feelings that seemed like hungry dogs fighting over a bone), who should I see at the door but Maggie Thatcher timidly looking in, and with her finger on her lips. I was up in an instant; and, with my heart all a-flame at the sight of her dear face looking so sad and, as handsome as ever, I went by her side down the lane without either of us saying a word. When we got to an old bench in a field, long called "The Lover's Seat," and had sat down, she looked so piteously in my face that my eyes grew moist, and then, bursting into tears, she said, as well as they would let her,—

"Oh, Jem—you're an old friend—the only one left—I must tell you all—I've gone and angered Davie at last, past mending this time—and he's gone off, and will never come back—and—I *hate* him—he's taken up with that viper whom I've been kind to since she was a motherless chit—and now he's gone, and I shall never see him again. But I don't *want* to, Jem. I hate him." (She said this with frightful force and bitterness.) "I don't want ever to see

him again—but I am so miserable, and I can't live without some comfort in life—and you've known me all my life, Jem, and have always been kind to me—and you will be kind to me still, won't you, and tell me what to do?"

Then she began sobbing again, poor thing. I couldn't stand that, and with all my old love for her flaming up in my heart, where it had been so long kept down, I took her in my arms before I knew what I was about, and kissed her again and again, and wiped away the hot tears from her eyes, and whispered to her,—

"Yes, my darling, I'll do anything to make you happy; I always loved you, my own dear Maggie, and I will be a comfort to you now in your trouble, and as long as I live, please God"—for the only thought in my heart then (there wasn't room for another) was, that if Davie had been neglecting her for another girl, and couldn't put up with her temper, and had made her hate him, I had now a right to take all this great blessing she offered me, and it

seemed to me as if I could make her very happy, happier than any other living soul.

Aye, that all seemed as clear as sunlight for a few minutes; but, bless you, I didn't understand a woman's feelings in such matters more than a monkey understands milking a cow. For, though it seemed a real comfort to her at first, the way I answered her,—she soon disengaged herself; and, taking my hand, and putting me back a bit, as it were, and then wiping her eyes, she said, “Thank’ee, thank’ee, dear old Jem—I knew you were a true friend—but, now, don’t’ee be making love to me, that’s a good fellow—you see, I’ve—been—Davie’s darling, and if I never see him again—you know, I seem to belong to him still—but oh, don’t’ee go away from me—I’m so unhappy, and I do want a bit of kindness and comfort more than I ever did in all my life.”

I’m sure she didn’t mean to be cruel; she hadn’t an idea what she was making me suffer. It was all her humbleness as

wouldn't let her think, even, what she must be making a fellow feel.

Still, one thing was plain amid all that horrible confusion, and that was that I might be of some use and comfort to her, if I could give up all thoughts of being her lover, and care for her only as my sister. So, whatever it might cost me, I said to myself I would try, with God's help, to be like a brother to the poor child. So after a time I took her home to her mother, and the smile with which she thanked me, as I said good-bye, and the look of peace in her face, were a better reward than any I ever expected to have, and a great deal better than I deserved.

After that I used to go and cheer her up whenever I could. And somehow, after a time, she was dearer to me than ever, though I never, as I believe, for a moment, passed the line she drew.

Once or twice I had a note from Davie, by which I could see he was in a miserable way, and I saw, too, that he had no idea of coming back to be Kitty Barber's lover.

So my heart softened towards him, and though I was sure it was better for both not to try and bring them together again at present, I seemed to feel as if I were guarding and comforting my darling for that poor fellow, who was wandering about, hundreds of miles away. My old love for him seemed to come back as I crushed down all thought of trying to oust him. And though it was sometimes very hard and bitter work, I don't know but what I had more real peace and comfort during that time than ever before, or, maybe, since.

But I won't deny I couldn't help, now and again, seeing that if Davie never did come back to her, nor marry her, she might like, years hence, to take me "for better for worse," and that the more comfort I could be to her now, the more chance for me by-and-by. But, thank God, I didn't *build* on that thought—never let it stay with me more than a minute or so, just once and away, perhaps when I needed a drop of water to cool my own



thirst; and by His help, Who, I had come to learn by this time, never does fail us (for I soon found I wasn't up to it by myself), I was able to be a true friend and helper, though a very poor one, to Maggie Thatcher, without once making her wish she hadn't trusted me.

Whatever my chances, however, might be either of helping Maggie and Davie to a reconciliation at last, or of taking his place in her affections, they were all upset by a strange misfortune after Roberts had been gone about four or five months. For master sends for me one day to his office, and says that his friend the builder at Eastleigh badly wanted me to go back again—that all the old alarm about Chartism had died away down there, and if I hadn't a grudge against him for sending me away when the 'squire ordered him, he'd give me a friendly welcome back again and good wages. As one might expect, I was a'most knocked over at the thought; and Mr. Grapnell, seeing I didn't



look much like willing to go, began saying, "I don't want you to leave, Woodford, of course, but it will be a deal easier for me to get a good staircase hand in London, though not a steadier than you, than it will be for my friend down in Somerset. He's tried several, but the good workmen are such fellows to drink, and the common run can no more strike a curve and find a centre, or put up a skylight, than a pig. Come, let bygones be bygones, my man, and pack up your tools and go."

I told him I didn't bear a bit of malice. I always liked the gentleman, and I knew how the screw had been put on him. It wasn't that— "Well, what was it then? Weren't the wages good enough?" No, no, not that. All the time the master was speaking I was driven about in my mind like a ship in a gale. Truth is, the strain on me was sometimes getting a'most too much for me. The peace of mind I felt for a time was fast slipping away. I loved that girl as much, or more, than ever, now

that I saw, so often, how very lovable she was, in spite of all her tantrums. Besides she was softened and sweetened by her great sorrow, and by knowing she had, in some degree, brought it on herself by her temper. So that I couldn't help thinking of her day and night, whenever, indeed, I wasn't at work. I used to count the days and hours till I was to see her again; while all the time I was with her I had to be a'most as cool as if I had been her grandfather. But for all that, I knew I couldn't bear not to be often near to help and comfort her, and I felt sure my only chance of ever calling her my wife, if she and Davie didn't come together, was, as I said, to keep near her now. Then again, I couldn't bear leaving her without some friend, so to say, at hand. So there I stood twirling my cap, and looking as stupid, I daresay, as an ass in the pound. But what settled me at last to go was that I knew things couldn't well go on much longer, so far as I was concerned as they were doing then. So I told the master I

wouldn't mind going down to Eastleigh just to do the 'squire's grand staircase, which, he said, needn't to be above four or five weeks at the outside, and then I must be back again in town. He promised that I might come back when the job was done, and I wished him good-morning, lighter in heart a bit than I went to him, for I was sore spent with the strange fix I had got into, and could hardly get about my work. My shopmates sometimes chaffed me with "either being in love or half starved, they weren't sure which;" and my mother was getting downright unhappy about me. It was the *uncertainty* about the whole affair that came over me. If Davie had been out-and-out married to Margaret Thatcher, it would have been all plain sailing enough. But I knew Davie Roberts, and knew that with all his goodness of heart, there was a deal of the devil in him, and a sort of vindictiveness that made it very hard for him either to forgive or forget. So I guessed it was most likely (unless something wonderful turned up) that he would stay

in Wales and marry one of the pretty girls that are so plentiful down there (he was half a Welshman himself), and never come back to Broadfield. An impulsive, hot-tempered fellow he was, and that would have been just like him. But then there was another thought that weighed a great deal with me. If I went down to Eastleigh I might meet Mr. Fletcher again, and hear him preach and pray. He had done me good in a way that I felt was for life, and not for this life only. I couldn't exactly explain what he had done for me, if I tried—and I don't want to try. But I know in my own case, and I've seen it with many others, that there's nothing in the world a man feels so grateful for, *if he gets it*, as what is called spiritual good. I know many would say, "That's all nonsense. Most men value money, or drink, or success, or their wife or sweetheart, a precious deal more than any spiritual good the parson may do them." No doubt, but that is because he *doesn't really do the good* which I mean. It is rather uncommon, I

believe, to feel it has been done for 'em. All I say is, that *when* we do feel it, we are more thankful for it than for any other blessing.

## CHAPTER II.

So I went down once again to Eastleigh, after a sorrowful parting with Maggie (who seemed to feel my going a deal more than I thought she would), and was kindly welcomed by Mr. Barnett, the builder, and by some of my old mates who were still there, but others seemed rather cool and jealous, particularly the one who I thought had done me an ill turn when the row about Chartism took place. I remember his saying the very first morning, as we went to work,—

“I say, Master Woodford, I hope you aint a-going to get us all into another mess over this precious Charter of yours.”

“Don’t fear,” says I, pretty short.  
“The Charter’s not for the likes of you.

It's only for true-born Britons, who

‘Never, never, never, will be slaves ;’

You can be a slave as long as your patience lasts, my man, without help or hinder from me.”

Then my mates laughed ; and he pretended to laugh, too, but he had a black look for me in his heart, I know.

That didn't much matter to me, I thought ; but an enemy can always do mischief. However, I soon forgot all about the man and his black looks, for I had a tough job before me which it took all my wits to tackle, and a good many eyes looking at me. Glad indeed I was to find Mr. Fletcher was still at Eastleigh, and when work was done for the day a very warm kindly welcome I had from him. I missed Bembridge greatly, and couldn't see my way clear to do anything for the Charter, though I *thought* more than ever now that Mr. Lovett was suffering in Warwick goal. But, as I was only down for a short time, and couldn't keep the ball rolling there, I didn't think I

ought to stir them up, and perhaps get them all sacked. So I was obliged to be quiet, and only thought how soon I could get back to the London Chartists, and to Broadfield, and in the meantime how often I could have a talk with Mr. Fletcher and hear him preach.

One night, after I had been about three weeks at Eastleigh, one of my mates and I, instead of going straight home at night, went with a couple of labourers in the village to have a look at the allotment gardens which the Squire had parcelled out for all the men on his estate. And very capital things they were, I could see that. Then we all had a pint at the village inn, and my companion and I had our bread and cheese, for the labourers wanted to hear all we could tell them about the Chartist movement. So it was past nine before we moved home. The moon was shining brightly, but there was a dark bit of road under the park palings where the trees were thick. Just as we were in the darkest part we came upon four more of the



labouring men who lived in that village, and I knew one by his voice, having chatted with him sometimes in coming backwards and forwards.

It was so dark that I could only just see that they appeared to have some bags with them: and as we came up and passed a word or two of "Well, Bill," and "Well, Jack," and so on, they said they had been out late gardening on their allotment ground, and were going home now with some roots and vegetables for the housewife's pot-boiling.

As we walked briskly along, however, we suddenly heard a rustling in the wood under the shadow of which we were passing.

One of the men stopped, and says to me,

"Here, Master Woodford, just hold my scraping-iron and bag of roots for a minute, will you, while I see what's up there?" and put what seemed a thick iron rod into one of my hands and a bag into the other.

"What's this?" says I; but just at the moment, as he was moving off, not towards

the place where we had heard the noise, but in another direction, four men jumped out of the hedge over the palings and rushed at us.

“Footpads, by Godes!” said the man who had given me the things to hold, and then away he and his friends went like a shot.

My companion, seeing them run, and hearing what they said, and having nothing in his hands to defend himself with, had cut and run at the first alarm, and so there was I left face to face with the highway-men; and as they sprang at me pretty fiercely, I thought the best thing was to lay about me with the iron tool in my hand, which I did so sharply that one of the fellows was dashed to the ground, and another had his arm broken, before the other two had pinioned me and laid me on my back. When, however, I expected to have my watch taken, and pockets turned inside-out (precious little would they have found there, though!) fancy my surprise on finding that they were the Squire’s game-

keepers, that my iron rod was a gunbarrel, unscrewed from the stock, that the bag of roots was a bag of pheasants lying at my feet, and that I had disabled one keeper and half killed another. Then it flashed on me how that the beggars had been out poaching, and had played the scurvy trick upon me, by which they got off, leaving me to bear the brunt of the business. Of course, I was taken to jail, kept there a fortnight, till the doctor said the keeper's life was out of danger, then was brought before the bench. It wasn't the first time I had been before the magistrates, but till that day only as a spectator. To stand in the dock with irons on my wrists was a new feeling, and the more unpleasant because I knew I had been doing "grievous bodily harm," as the indictment (or whatever they called it) ran, to two fellow-men engaged in doing their duty, I suppose, (queer duty!) according to law, game law, i. e., and accursed law, too, I think. But, then the knowledge that I had been innocent of anything but defending myself, as I thought,

against robbers, kept me up, and I spoke out and told the bench all about it. Of course, the Squire wasn't sitting there, but he was in Court, and had been in the magistrates' room. At first I thought they were going to believe me, and the testimony to character given by my employer and Mr. Fletcher, and especially the evidence of my shopmate who had run away, evidently made a great impression on them.

But the Squire's counsel (for he had sent for one in a hurry all the way from Bristol) pressed the case against me very hard. He said the Squire had suffered very much "from these scoundrelly poachers," and an example must be made of them. Then he was just arguing that my shopmate had no doubt been poaching with me, for the gamekeepers said they saw a man with me resembling my mate whom they couldn't catch, when a note was put in his hand, the reading of which made him put on a horrified look and exclaim, "Good gracious! where are we!"

Then he requested that Mr. Fletcher might be again put in the witness-box.

"Sir," said he, "I think you know something about a certain set of dangerous characters in Eastleigh known as Chartists?"

Mr. Fletcher winced.

I was sorry for him, but he spoke straight out like a man.

"I do, and thoroughly respect several of them; I do not consider them as dangerous." (*Sensation in court and on the bench.*)

"Humph!" and the barrister looked at the bench, and knew that all the value of Mr. Fletcher's testimony to my character was gone; and that Mr. Fletcher's character was gone too.

"I think you have attended their meetings?"

"Sometimes."

"Is not the prisoner a leading member of their Society?"

"I don't know that they have any society in Eastleigh now."

*Counsel* : “ Sir, I beg you will not prevaricate. Is the prisoner Woodford an out-and-out Chartist, or is he not ? ”

“ I am not here, sir, to be insulted by you.”

One of the Magistrates, sternly : “ You had better answer the question.”

“ I am quite ready, your worship, to answer questions, but not to be bullied. James Woodford I believe to be a thorough-going, moral-force Chartist.” (*Sensation again.*)

My employer was next re-called.

*Squire's Counsel* (triumphantly) : “ I believe the prisoner was discharged from your employment about a year ago for taking an active part in the Chartist agitation down here ? ”

If I was sorry for Mr. Fletcher, I was ten times more so for my master. His state was pitiable ; but he had to answer and gasped out,

“ Yes, sir—but—”

“ Oh, never mind the buts, my good man we only want to know the fact.

You may step down now. Gentlemen, I think I need not trouble you any more."

"Not the least occasion, Mr. ——," replied the Chairman.

The magistrates' two heads nodded to each other.

"Committed for trial. Bail refused, because of the still dangerous condition of one of the gamekeepers."

And I was forthwith locked up. In the silence and darkness of my cell I had time enough to bless the sneaking fellow who told the butler, who told the Squire, who told the barrister that I had been discharged a year ago for Chartism.

Of course, I had written off to my father when I was first taken to prison, and Mr. Fletcher took a world of pains, and I fear spent a deal of money to help me. My dear old dad pinched himself and mother sadly to send off all they could spare, and a barrister from Bristol was also engaged for as well as against me. He was a clever young chap, and made out a pretty strong case, but he didn't like or understand the



Chartist side of the matter. However, it was not much any of them could do, and very little use their doing anything at all. The evidence in the depositions read at the Assizes was too strongly against me, though what my master and Mr. Fletcher (who explained nobly the difference between the physical and moral-force Chartists) and my shop-companion said at the trial, and the way they said it, evidently made a good deal of impression both on the Judge, and I think on some of the jury. My employer had plucked up courage and came forward like a man to give me a good character, for he wanted to have me back at my work, and wished to clear his own character, besides having a kindly feeling towards me, and, I think, fully believing the story I told. However, the end of it was that I got sentenced to two years' imprisonment with hard labour; and was marched off to prison with that sort of feeling which only a man who has been unjustly condemned to prison life can understand.



It was about the very dreariest day I had ever spent in my life, when, after a long trial in a hot, stifling room, where scores of people were staring at me as if I were a wild beast, while my witnesses were being badgered and brow-beaten by the Squire's Counsel, I was sent off in the prison van with a lot more poor wretches, some of whose faces were enough to turn you sick. I knew I was going to be deprived unjustly of my liberty and be condemned to silence and the torturing treadmill or oakum-picking for two dismal years, scarcely ever seeing any of my friends, and then only in the presence of a turnkey, father and mother fretting their hearts out, and, worst of all, seeing nothing more of poor Maggie, and I knew how she would fret at losing brother as well as lover. My heart seemed to sink in me like lead, as I sat down on my pallet in the dark, when the key of my cell was turned.

Next, day, however, and for many a day after, I found there were worse things to

be borne in that infernal hole than my own thoughts and privations and sentimental regrets. The companionship of regular ingrained ruffians, their malicious delight in teasing and hurting me and others when they got a sly chance, merely to revenge themselves, I suppose, for what society was inflicting on them, their intolerably disgusting talk when we were by ourselves at night (a frightful abuse that of herding prisoners together, now mostly remedied), and then the scarcely less terrible loneliness during twelve hours of the evening and night when I was under "the separate system," with the dreadful torture of the treadmill till I was too ill to go on it. All these miseries laid a weight on me, body and soul, which for years I could not bear even to remember. The visits of the Chaplain were the only comfort I had during all these dreary months, and though he seemed rather case-hardened by his work, and was often stupidly stuck-up and conventional, yet I saw he was a good and sincere man, and he seemed to believe a

good deal of my story, and was really kind and helpful to me.

I can't say how many months exactly had gone over in this way, when one morning the governor came along the corridor and stopped the turnkey as I was being taken out after breakfast to the oakum-picking.

"Here, Woodford," said he, "the Secretary of State has sent you a pardon from her most gracious Majesty, and I daresay you don't want to give us your company any longer."

Good heavens! what a moment it was. My knees trembled, and I could hardly speak. But I pretty soon found myself outside, and my dear old father and Mr. Fletcher waiting for me in the lodge. Then I found that, fortunately for me at last, the fellow who had got me into this misery and shame had been apprehended some time after for another aggravated case of poaching and attempt to murder, and sent to the county gaol where I was confined; but, though a wild and desperate

fellow, there was good in the man at bottom, and, as often happens, a sense of justice and fair play. So when he found he was in for either hanging or transportation, he made a clean breast of it, and told the chaplain what were the facts of the case with regard to unfortunate me. The chaplain, who was already inclined to believe me innocent, laid his representation before the governor, and they sent it to the judge who had tried my case, and, as it squared with his own convictions in the trial, he soon got a pardon for me from the Home Office.

One of the first things I heard about, on coming out of gaol, was the rising in Wales under Frost, Williams, and Jones; and the next was that Davie Roberts had been in it. When I heard the whole story, it answered the question I was burning to ask father, whether Davie had come back to Broadfield, and made it up again with Maggie Thatcher.

Down to Devizes it seems the Chartist Deputation had gone in April, 1839; got

there late at night, and next morning were welcomed by a tolerably large gathering of their Wiltshire fellow-Chartists, that is to say, as many of them as ventured to show their colours. For the Londoners found it was true, as they had been told at the Convention, that a reaction had set in in that part of the country, and they went down to try and turn the tide again in favour of the good cause. When, however, the time for the open-air public meeting was drawing on, it became pretty evident that the tide was not going to turn just then, for the upper-class folks set a queer sort of example to the Wiltshire working-men as well as to Chartists in all parts of the kingdom by setting on a mob of agricultural labourers to charge the Chartists, upset their platform, and disperse the meeting. Vincent and the rest of them, however, were not disposed to give in altogether on the non-resistant principle, so they stood up to fight like trueborn Britons. Davie's blood was up, and he was desperate with heartache into the bargain ;

so he charged the peace-breakers with a will, and many of them were sent flying. But numbers were against the defenders of the Charter. Davie got his head cut open with a brick-bat, and was carried off insensible; several of the other Chartists were very roughly handled, and there was an end of the mission to Devizes. No doubt the well-to-do classes of the neighbourhood — magistrates included — were highly pleased at this result, and doubtless thought the precept, “thou shalt not do evil that good may come of it,” might very properly be relaxed for once in their favour. Instructions came down to Vincent to go into Monmouthshire, where a very formidable movement was being organized under Mr. Frost, who, as I said before, had been a magistrate for the county, but had been most unfairly dismissed by Lord John Russell for attending the Chartist Convention and two Chartist meetings in London. The gallant miners and ironworkers among the Welsh hills had been thoroughly roused by the eloquence of Henry Vincent and



other of our emissaries; but they had somewhat gone ahead of their leaders so far as those belonged to the moral-force party. They were all of them, in fact, in that part of the country taking a leaf out of Feargus O'Connor's book, and had quite made up their minds that soft words—or hard either for that matter—would butter no Chartist parsnips, and that pikes and fire-arms alone could carry the day. There had consequently been a great deal of arming among them; and when Vincent's fiery words fell on their ears, on the occasion of this visit which I am now describing, it was a spark in a powder barrel. Davie Roberts followed his eloquent leader to Newport as soon as he was well enough to travel, and got to that borough just in time to witness the committal of his friend to prison for giving vent to seditious language at a meeting in the neighbourhood. This was more than Roberts and the rest of the Welshmen could stand. To increase their indignation, came news of that sad business at Birmingham, when one of the darkest

days that ever dawned for English workmen, and the Chartist movement witnessed the imprisonment of that great and good man, my noble leader, William Lovett, along with John Collins, a fine fellow also, to Warwick gaol, for the heinous offence of printing and posting a proclamation in Birmingham denouncing the shameful conduct of the Birmingham magistracy and the London police for their brutal attacks on an unarmed Birmingham populace in the Bull-ring. At the same time, three of those who had really been engaged in the Birmingham riots were sentenced to death. The Rev. Robert Stephens, "Methodist minister and fire-brand," whose attacks, however, had chiefly been upon the new Poor Law, was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment. Another of our ablest leaders—a man of considerable education—Dr. Macdouall, had got twelve months; while from thirty to forty other Chartists were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Smarting under all these cruel blows, the Convention,



which had been moved from London by O'Connor's influence, dissolved itself on a resolution which, however, was only carried by the chairman's casting vote. Feargus himself was at length arrested and held to bail on a charge of sedition. He afterwards got a year in York Castle; but the Government seem to have spared him as long as they could, feeling perhaps that he was the best friend to the "powers that be" in consequence of the manner in which he sowed division in the Chartist ranks, and stirred them to sedition. For thus the Government got satisfactory excuses for having their leaders committed to prison. Some of those who were thus shut up were certainly no great loss either to the movement or the nation; but it was very different in the case of others, especially the removal of Lovett at such a time from the head of affairs was a real national calamity, for thus the way was left open for violent and unscrupulous counsels to prevail. None of us, however, lacked motives in abundance to take any desperate steps that

might present themselves; and, for my own part, I felt so mad at the idea of Lovett's imprisonment, and the hardships which we heard he suffered in gaol, and which brought him nearly to death's door, that I would have shouldered pike or pulled trigger against the tyrannical murderers, could it have afforded him any possible help or satisfaction. This was just how it was in Monmouthshire, also, where the Chartists were enraged beyond all bounds by the cruel way in which Vincent and his fellow-sufferers were treated.

## CHAPTER III.

ARRANGEMENTS had been made for a simultaneous rising in the North as soon as tidings should be transmitted to the Chartists in that quarter of the insurrection in Monmouthshire. Davie had been quite in his element. Everything round him suited well with the troubled state of his own mind, and his vehement hatred of oppression. He had been kept on by the Convention lecturing and spouting (sometimes earning a little at his trade), during all those stormy months.

Happily, I suppose, for the general welfare, and ultimate good, even of the working classes at large, violent steps at that time were resorted to in one locality only—the one where Vincent and Davie

Roberts had been exerting their abilities as agitators for the last six months among the Welsh mal-contented. The storm was gathering round the gaol, where Vincent was confined, as a nucleus of agitation. On Saturday evening, November 3rd, 1839, the Monmouthshire miners were mustering from far and near, armed and desperate. Mr. Frost, with his two principal coadjutors—Messrs. Williams and Jones—were in the midst of the gathering, and never were leaders looked up to with more devoted loyalty than were those three men by their exasperated fellow-countrymen.

The following night, as soon as darkness began to fall, they marched their followers—four or five thousand strong—down from the hills on the town of Newport, the only body of troops for the defence of which consisted of thirty red-coats, ensconced behind the shutters of a room in the principal inn of the town, under the command of a non-commissioned officer and the Mayor of the Borough,

Mr. Thomas Phillips. Proud, indeed, felt the insurgents, as they marched along in serried columns, confident of a glorious victory, and expecting that the Charter would thus be carried at the point of their pikes. Prouder, and more hopeful than all, no doubt, was poor Davie himself; he felt himself every inch a soldier, and when the inn came in sight, he rushed on at the head of his column, like a hero of the first water. The thirty soldiers and the mayor behind their shutters heard the tramp of many feet, and knew that a very large force must be approaching for the attack. Had they allowed themselves to be assaulted behind their defences, the consequences to themselves would in all probability have been most disastrous; but a victory for the rioters would undoubtedly have been a far greater calamity. Mr. Phillips (who for his gallant conduct on this occasion was afterwards knighted by the Queen with special marks of honour at Windsor) took the bold step of having the shutters torn down in the face of the enraged

multitude outside. This was the signal for a discharge from the fire-arms of the Welsh rioters. The mayor was wounded with several others, but in the next instant, the soldiers fired volley after volley right into the dense ranks opposed to them. Two or three rounds, however, were sufficient. The miners took to flight, in spite of the strenuous exertions of Frost, Roberts, poor Shell, and the braver spirits among them. Thereupon, the red-coats, leaping through the windows, charged with fixed bayonets, and Frost was captured on the spot. Williams and Jones were coming up with their columns, and meeting the flying masses, gave the signal for disbanding, and such as were not captured took to their heels in general riot and confusion. Roberts escaped for a time. The three leaders were very speedily intercepted, and with the rest of the prisoners committed to gaol for trial on a charge of high treason. Seldom has there been such a marked illustration of the inability of armed mobs to contend against dis-

ciplined troops. Here were 5000 armed men put to headlong flight by thirty soldiers.

The next morning, a haggard, blood-stained man was knocking at the door, in the dim twilight, of a poor cottage among the hills, about five miles from Newport. The inmates were still asleep, and he could gain no hearing or entrance. He knocked more vehemently—frantically indeed, for by this time, he said, all his courage had evaporated under the pain of his wounds, and a sense of utter defeat. He might well knock, for he heard, dashing up the mountain path, a horse's hoofs, and he knew only too well who was on his track. Just as the alarmed cottagers within had scrambled down to the door, and had taken out the wooden bar to see what was the matter, a mounted trooper, armed to the teeth, swung himself from his horse, seized Davie Roberts by the hands, had the handcuffs over his wrists, set him on the horse behind him, and was off again down the mountain side before the Welsh cottage



mountaineers well knew what had happened. They understood it, however, only too well, soon after, as troops of wrathful miners, furious with their enemies and themselves, came slinking past in parties of thirty or forty, on their way back to the homes from which they were hourly expecting, for many a day afterwards, to be ignominiously dragged.

The day on which the news of the Newport rising reached Broadfield (and it spread all over the country like wildfire), my father happened to meet Margaret Thatcher. She was trying not to look anxious, but she was all of a tremble, and father felt uncommonly sorry for the young thing with nobody to rest on.

Says she, "Mr. Woodford, can ye tell me if all this be true about the fighting down there in Wales?"

"I'm afeared it's a great deal too true, my dear; more's the pity!"

"And can ye tell me,"—then she stopped, and blushed as red as a peony, and she could hardly speak—"You've always been



a friend to me, Mr. Woodford—most of all since poor Jem was locked up—and I haven't a friend in the world I can trust but him and you, and I don't mind asking you, but can ye tell me, or can ye find out for me, whether Davie Roberts was in it?"

Father said she looked so sorrowful, he quite longed to bring her home to his wife for a little comfort. He could not tell her then, but he found out by next day what had happened to young Roberts. So he told her carefully, but she turned very white, and then thanked him so sadly and lovingly. He asked her to come and see his wife, but she only shook her head and pressed his hand very hard, and went back home.

It seems she had an aunt who was pretty well to do, having married a sort of under-bailiff, and who was living, I think, near Galleywood Common, in Essex. That good woman was bustling about early in the morning of the day after father had told Maggie all about Roberts, getting ready

for her husband's breakfast (I believe she had no children), when, hearing the latch lifted, who should she see coming in, all draggled and wet, but her niece from Broadfield.

"Why, Maggie!" she exclaimed, "what on earth brings you here at this time o' day?"

"Oh, aunt," said the girl, sinking on a seat, "I've walked thro' the night all the way from Broadfield, and I am ready to drop. Give me a bit to eat."

"Walked! all night! from Broadfield, through the rain—twenty miles! Why, my poor lass, what in the name of—but here, take this, and this, and let's have the wet shoes off you; and here's your gown and shawl wringing wet, too; dear, dear. Come, child, and let's put you to bed a bit."

But though the motherly kindness of the good woman was very sweet to the aching heart of the wanderer, nothing could give her troubled spirit or body much rest till she had unburdened her mind, and told her

aunt, 'mid many tears, all the story of her quarrel with Davie, and how he was now wounded and in prison, and how she wanted her aunt to lend her a few pounds, that she might go to him and nurse him if they'd let her, and help get some wise lawyer to defend him.

The good aunt had been head over ears in love herself, and she perswaded her burly kind-hearted husband that the poor thing must have the money. So after dinner Maggie went back by coach to Stratford (whence it was only three miles' walk to Broadfield) much quicker than she came, and with a good bit of the heavy burden with which she had walked to Galleywood Common in darkness and rain, lifted off her weary heart. But enough trouble remained, and swiftly as the half-completed rail and galloping horses bore her down next day to Monmouthshire, pictures of Davie, blood-stained, wan, parched with fever, and perhaps dying of his wounds, would force themselves on her mind, and made the hours seem to creep by with in-

tolerable slowness. A few shillings had secured for her mother and the young ones needful attentions from a neighbour, so that she felt free to leave them. But as she neared Newport, a cold chilling fear crept into her heart, as she thought, "What if Davie has not forgiven me as I have forgiven him?" or, "What if it be unbecoming of me to be forcing myself on him in this way?"

But when once they got sight of each other, there was no doubt about forgiveness, or propriety, or anything else; and as she was clasped in the wounded man's arms on his dingy truckle-bed, and their tears mingled, there were other eyes moist, too, and rough hands drawn across those eyes to hide the weakness.

A special Commission came down to try the rioters for high treason. To be found guilty of that charge, of course, meant sentence of death. When, after a long and patient trial, Frost, Williams, and Jones were committed, and left for execution, Maggie was waiting near the gaol door, to

get a chance of speaking with Davie; and when the kind-hearted turnkey (himself a Welshman, and a bit moved to sympathy by Maggie's handsome, sad, and pleading face) got leave for her to be admitted, she went with the feeling that it would be almost their last meeting in this world. Several of the Newport Chartists, hearing that she was Davie Roberts' sweetheart, had shown her great kindness, but she seemed insensible to everything except the one absorbing question, "Will he live or die?" When alone, her remorse was sometimes terrible, for she kept saying to herself and the friend who gave her a lodging, "If I hadn't worried him with that temper of mine, he wouldn't have taken up with that Kitty Barber, and we shouldn't have quarrelled, and he wouldn't have been down here, fighting against the red-coats, and getting shot, and like to be hung."

"Oh, missis," she moaned, "my misery is greater than I can bear."

Davie tried hard to comfort her. All the rare generosity of his nature rose up at

the sight of her grief, for he knew well he had been much in fault, and he vehemently took all the blame of their estrangement on himself. But it was too late for either penitence or generosity to help the poor souls now. Davie Roberts, supported by a turnkey, had to answer to his name in the dock, as his leaders had had to do before him, and many others too, before and after him who had been caught with arms in their hands on that fatal Sunday in November, 1839. His youthful appearance, and bright feverish eyes, with the deadly pallor of his face and forehead on which his thick brown curls lay tangled, excited considerable sympathy among the spectators, and I think even among the jury. But it was proved by several witnesses that he had been lecturing and addressing public meetings all through South Wales and in other places for several months past. This would have told heavily against him, had any really seditious language been also proved to have been used by him. But no one seemed able to quote treasonable or even



physical force exhortations from his speeches, and some witnesses deposed to hearing him tell the people to be very careful not to break the peace. Fortunately for him no traitor was found to tell of the very violent language he really had used in several places shortly before the outbreak, when he was maddened by accounts of the treatment of Lovett, Vincent, and others in gaol, and by the proceedings of the Convention in London. Hence the balance of all this evidence was rather in his favour. Maggie's fee, swelled by a contribution from many members of the Convention, paid to a remarkably clever young spark from Bristol, who saw it was an opportunity to make himself known, was a much more efficient ally, while the best chance of all was actually the courage Davie himself had shown in the fray. For being one of the foremost in the onslaught he was one of the first to fall by the soldiers' bullets, and then had dragged himself aside and lay trying to staunch his wound in the darkness while the soldiers rushed down the

street after the flying mob. The prisoners who were taken were almost all from among those fugitives and two or three of the wounded ; but when the street was clear Davie was secretly carried into the cottage near which he lay, and his wound bound up, on condition that he would be off before daylight. This promise the poor fellow faithfully kept, and dragged himself to an old friend among the hills, as we have already seen. Hence his counsel urged with great energy that no witness had even attempted to prove that Davie had been seen in the fight, or with arms in his hands ; there was nothing whatever against him except that he had been found a long way from the scene of action, wounded and exhausted, at the door of, probably, some near relative. "Doubtless he was attracted like many others by the unusual disturbances going on to see what could be the cause it, and unhappily, but surely with most innocent indiscretion, had gone too near the fatal spot and been hit by a stray shot, fired it might be by the rioters themselves. Then,



conscious how much appearances would be against him, had fled with the flying crowd. Was this evidence on which to convict a man of high treason, and take away an innocent citizen's life! Surely the halter and the axe would have victims enough to glut their fury without sacrificing more of English lives on such miserably insufficient evidence as had just been laid before the jury. Let the gentlemen of the jury think of the mothers, and wives, and innocent children, whose whole future welfare in this world, perhaps in the next, was dependent on the verdict which, as free-born Britons and as men, they were this day solemnly called on to deliver."

A buzz of sympathy and applause ran round the court when he finished; and many an eye was turned in loving pity not on Roberts only, but also on the young girl who, scarcely able to breathe in the agony of suspense, stood near the dock, gazing alternately on the prisoner and the jury, sometimes with an imperious mien as if commanding that her lover should be

instantly released, sometimes with a look of passionate supplication like a captive princess in disguise. A momentary silence followed. Then the prisoner's counsel stated that he should call no witnesses because there was no evidence to rebut—not enough to convict a man of stealing a pocket-handkerchief, much less to send him to the gallows. Then came the summing up by the judge. Even poor Maggie, who could not keep her attention to anything that was said for more than a minute at a time, could see that it leaned to mercy. The government would only be too glad, as the judge well knew, of any reasonable excuse for avoiding further bloodshed, and he did not conceal the fact that there was a great lack of sufficient evidence against the prisoner. Then the jury retired. A time of dread and almost intolerable suspense followed, during which there was a strange and unwonted quiet in the court. Every soul seemed longing to set the quasi-felon free.

At length the jury re-entered their box.

“Guilty or not guilty?”

“Not guilty, my lord.”

Maggie Thatcher clasped her hands together, and bursting into tears, sobbed out, “Thank God! Thank God!” while Davie made an instinctive rush towards her against the bars of his cage. Then the judge rose, the usual formalities were passed through, the excited crowd rapidly left the court, and many gathered round outside the door to congratulate the liberated prisoner, and to press small tokens of their sympathy and gladness on him and his interesting “young woman,” “just to help them home again, you know, and to get ready for the wedding.”

Poor Maggie, like Davie, was sore puzzled between her pride and her necessities how to receive all this kindness, but she remembered her aunt, and knowing that most of her borrowed money was gone, she, amid many smiles and tears, accepted the generosity showered on her, and tried in vain to speak her thanks; while the people round felt that the sight

of her beautiful blushing face, and the trustful gladness with which she took her lover's arm and walked away, were quite enough reward for their donations.

But there was bitter sorrow among the Chartists for many a day. And not among them only. For years most true Chartists, whether they approved or condemned the Newport rising, mourned for the fate of men whom they looked on as genuine martyrs for English liberty; and resolutions or petitions for the pardon of "Frost, Williams, and Jones," began or concluded nearly every Chartist meeting for years after their transportation.

Soon after Davie and Maggie came back to Broadfield, I came out of gaol, and also arrived in the village. Then, of course, I heard the whole story, both of the part Davie had taken in the Newport riots, and of his recent return with Maggie. So I quickly hunted him up, and under the light of the stars we talked it all out, and I finished up by saying, "Now my dear old fellow, as soon as you can get work

again, you and she must be spliced at once." I would take no refusal, for I had had time enough to think it over and over while I was in gaol, and I knew by this time that their hearts were indeed one, so that they ought to run no more risks of those miserable and ridiculous misunderstandings. I won't say that my heart wasn't a little heavy and sore, but I suppose I sha'n't forget to my dying day the happiness I felt when poor Davie took my hand, squeezing it with all his might, and saying, "God bless you, Jem! for all you have done for my Maggie and myself, and above all for that you didn't make love to her, and try to oust me, but just took care of her as a brother should; oh! she's told me all about it. God bless you, old friend, and may your turn for such a blessed union as this come at last!"

I went to my old employers' next day and told them all my story, and was precious glad to see how thoroughly they believed me, and how glad they seemed to be at the mystery being cleared up, and at the

Government pardon (pardon indeed) ! opening my prison-doors. They said they should have work for me on the following Monday, and I was well pleased, I can tell you, to find Kelso once more back in his old post ; he and I had some famous walks together before my work began again. The first expedition was to our " house of call," to inquire if anything could be got for Davie. At first all seemed blank, but after a little time a job was found for him that promised to be permanent, if he would take the trouble to learn a few things that he wasn't properly up to then. He was glad enough to set to work with a will. I lent him my books, and gave him as much time as I could. The banns were put up in Broadfield Church the following Sunday, and in a month's time they were married. Happy indeed they were in their little lodgings in Camden Town, during not only those early days, but for a long time after, he sticking to his work like a brick by day, and working with me at his drawings and his geometry at night. Then



there was a delightful walk for them up to Hampstead Heath, Primrose Hill, or the Regent's Park, every Sunday, which did them a world of good—Maggie especially, for she did miss the country lanes and field footpaths of Broadfield. But the Millennium hadn't come yet.

On looking back on what I have written, it seems to me I have said a good deal about other folks' faults and not much of my own. But though I have not read a great deal of such histories, I fancy that must be common enough. I remember hearing once that we all carry two wallets, one hanging before, and the other behind us. We put our neighbour's faults in the foremost, and our own in the other—which means I suppose we can see their faults a deal more plainly than our own. But it's not altogether that, for, if we do see our own ever so plainly, we think "It is an ill bird that fouls its own nest;" and why should we tell tales of ourselves? Why? Because our pride wants humbling, and if we confess, perhaps there's more chance of

mending. Not always. We've heard, I think, of very candid folk who

“Confess their faults and—never mend.”

And then again, we can see better than anybody else how much there is to be said in excuse for our faults, what great allowance should be made for us, &c., &c., though, if we could only do that for our neighbours—

But what is the good of palavering in this way? I suppose it is because I don't like saying that about this time I can see, on looking back, I was getting very surly and morose, as they call it. I seldom had a kind word for anybody, unless may be for Maggie; and I don't know as I ever did anybody a good turn then if I could help it. I felt regular soured with the world altogether; and in a way, I knew I hated half the men I came across, especially the Government, the physical force Chartist, the *Northern Star*—and “Feergus” above all and everybody. So there is a bit of my confession; and I don't see the



good of telling any more mischief about myself, particularly as I think, though I won't be sure, that that's the worst.

All these private troubles and joys, however, of which I have been speaking, had not lessened my interest in the great movement for which noble-hearted Lovett was now a martyr in Warwick Gaol. And when he was released (on the 25th July, 1840), I needn't say I was one of those who had intended to go down with the other London delegates to greet his entrance into Birmingham, as arrangements had been made for a public procession, and a grand festival to do him honour. Unhappily, however, his health had been so broken by the cruel treatment he had received in prison, that, declining this triumphal reception, as well as a number of other invitations, he went off to Cornwall, as he says in his memoirs, to "try as a restorative the air of his native place." We did, however, manage to persuade him to come to a public dinner given to himself and his fellow-prisoner, Mr. Collins, at the White

Conduit House, in a large tent, on August 3rd, when there were a thousand of us sitting down with them to dinner. Mr. Wakley, M.P., was in the chair, and Tom Duncombe, M.P., the other member for Finsbury, and Dr. Bowring, were present, with many others. Richard Moore, a man of sterling worth, and a great friend of Lovett's, acted as secretary. This dinner was a great success, and raised the spirits of all the friends of the Charter, except those who were intolerably jealous of any honour shown to Lovett, which they always fancied was so much disrespect to their idol, O'Connor. Lovett and Collins had printed and published a very valuable little work called "Chartism," which was partly written in gaol, and was very favourably received; so much so that a second edition was brought out; but this, in consequence of the opposition made by the O'Connorites, Lovett says, was only a loss. Lovett also was shamefully treated by a certain publisher and printer, as well as dunned by other people, for claims which ought never

to have been made; but, on the other hand, "various working men's associations, the Cabinet-makers' societies," and other friends had all been exerting themselves in different ways to support Lovett's wife and daughter while he was in prison, to enable him to go down to Cornwall, and to start him in a small business when he returned; for it seemed clear his health would not allow of his returning to work at the cabinet-making trade; and he thought that a small bookseller's shop, in Tottenham Court Road, might earn the family bread. His wife, who was always a brave and true helpmate to him, could manage the shop for the most part, leaving him free to devote himself to the great object of his life—the enfranchisement of his poorer fellow-countrymen and their elevation in the social, mental, and moral scale. He was soon therefore again endeavouring to form a Society on the plan set forth in the pamphlet on Chartism; and in compliance with a requisition, he drew up an admirable address, which was signed by

Collins, Hetherington, Cleave, Rogers, Moore, &c., among other leading men, proposing the establishment of a Society to be called the "National Association of the United Kingdom," for promoting the political and social improvement of the people. The whole of this address ought to be read in Lovett's *Memoirs* (page 248), by all persons interested not only in the history of the political agitations of that day, but also as a help and guide for the improvement of the condition of the people at the present time. The broad and high-toned principles on which he desired to work out his aims will be seen when it is mentioned that a principal object was to erect "public halls or schools for the people—such halls to be used in the middle of the day as infant, preparatory, and high schools, in which the children shall be educated on the most improved plans the Association can desire, embracing physical, mental, and political instruction; and used of an evening by adults for public lectures, on physical, moral, and political science,

for readings, discussions, musical entertainments, dancing, and such other healthful and rational recreations as may serve to instruct and cheer the industrial classes after toil, and prevent the formation of vicious and intoxicating habits. Such halls to have two play-grounds, and (where practicable), a pleasure-garden attached to each; apartments for the teachers; rooms for hot and cold baths; for a small museum; laboratory; and general workshop, where the members may be taught experiments in science, as well as the first principles of the most useful trades."

Here were the germs of many improvements more recently carried into effect, such as Workmen's Clubs, Penny Readings, and even Technical Education. Other useful plans and suggestions followed, and the address closed with the words:—"We remain your devoted servants, in the cause of liberty and social happiness,"—followed by the names of those who signed it. All the members of our Association welcomed the reading of this noble scheme with immense

satisfaction, when Lovett read it to us in draft one night; and I was specially glad to see how heartily Davie Roberts applauded it.

The address, however, of course was viewed by O'Connor and his friends as a shameful conspiracy (or at all events they thought proper to regard it as such) for subverting his power and plans, and it was denounced most bitterly in the *Northern Star*, as a scheme for supplanting the National Charter Association. All who put their names to it were denounced as "traitors, humbugs, and miscreants," and Lovett himself singled out for special abuse. The consequence was, says Lovett, that "votes of censure and denunciations now assailed us from all quarters of the kingdom where O'Connor's tools and dupes were found," and, as he (Lovett) says again—"if their power had been in proportion to their own vindictiveness," the lives of our leaders would very likely have been sacrificed. Indeed, a Mr. J. Watkins preached and published what he called a



“ Sermon to show the justice of assassinating ” our friends. Hereupon we issued another address, drawn up like the former by Lovett, vindicating our conduct and defending the plans proposed with regard to the public halls for the people. The second address said that “ by means of them our working class brethren might be taken out of the contaminating influences of public-houses and beershops—places where many of their meetings are still held, their passions are inflamed, their reason drowned, their families pauperized, and themselves socially degraded and politically enslaved.” Speaking of our objects, the address went on to urge “ all who would place freedom on an enduring basis to adopt such a course of agitation in favour of our Charter, as should unite in one bond of brotherhood the wise and benevolent of all classes, intent on cherishing and propagating the noblest principles of freedom among young and old, so that the most substantial fruits might be gathered from the political power we are now seeking to



obtain." The address further insisted on the need of "seeing our brethren prepare themselves to use that power (the franchise) wisely when they shall have obtained it."

It then declares that we are "opposed to everything in the shape of a physical and violent revolution,"—and that "sanguinary warfare, calling up the passions in the worst forms, must necessarily throw back for centuries our intellectual and moral progress"—that the "mere possession of the franchise is only a means to a just end," and that the great question is, "how shall all the resources of our country be made to advance the intellectual and social happiness of every individual?—and what benefit would be the franchise to those who if they *had* power would sacrifice all who differed from them?" The address concludes with describing the vast extent of the social misery which class legislation has occasioned, and then calls for united action "in order to investigate and remedy our social evils, and to place the liberties of our country on a sound and lasting founda-

tion. We sat listening to Lovett as he read this address by a bat's-wing gas-light, with almost breathless interest, and as he concluded, we burst into cheers repeated over and over again, as our answer to the shameful attacks made on him and his scheme.

As I said before, however, my object is not to give a history of the Chartist agitation, or of the labours and sufferings of my great-hearted friend; only to draw attention to them, and to rouse the working men of the present day to cherish the same ardent public spirit and desire for the political and social improvement of the people, while they learn from the experience of former days how to work out the same objects by wise and judicious measures; above all, I most earnestly desire to help my brother working men to avoid the terrible evils which arise from jealousy of the truly wise and good on the one hand, and blind slavish idolatry of selfish, needy, or grasping demagogues on the other.

And so between working with head and hand, the best part of another year passed away.

Few things I regretted more during all this time than my complete severance from Mr. Fletcher, who continued toiling on quietly, modestly, but I am afraid rather sorrowfully in the little town of East Leigh. There he had found his work, and there he believed it was his mission to labour. I should gladly have gone back as soon as the wedding was over, but I fancy Mr. Barnett did not altogether wish me to return to East Leigh so soon after I came out of prison. He was evidently rather nervous about what the squire (who was never fully persuaded of my innocence,) might say ; besides which, he had naturally been obliged to supply my place with another man. And though I must say I didn't altogether wish to be so near that happy little family party in the Camden Town lodgings, I was very desirous of helping Davie in his new zeal for "technical education." I wanted, also, quite as much, to

work with Lovett, and the rest of them, in the new start which he was now making, and of course all the more because of the shameful attacks that were being made against him. So I fagged away in London at the bench in the daytime, and for the National Association or Davie in the evening; until one day Mr. Grapnell, junr., called me once more into the office, and said, "Well, Woodford, it is the old story; Mr. Barnett wants you to go down again to East Leigh for a few months, and if you are willing to go, and let bygones be bygones, I suppose I must spare you; but take care you don't get mixed up with the poachers again!"

"Well, sir," said I, "I don't much like their company, and I don't like going where there is a large crop of them; but still I suppose it will be all safe now, and I think I have learnt a lesson."

I was the more willing to go because Bembridge told me that the Chartist cause had been reviving at East Leigh, and that I might be of a good deal of use he thought

in helping to guide it on the lines of the moral and intellectual improvement of the people, and to get a branch of the National Association established there. So taking leave of father and mother, and my very dear friends in Camden Town, who seemed as happy as ever, and as if their happiness never could be less, I once more returned to the little Somersetshire hot-bed of Chartism, as it had now become.

## CHAPTER IV.

OF course I went and looked up the minister as soon as I had half an hour to spare. He was sitting over his books and writing-desk, and it looked all the same as it used to do, just as if I had only left him the night before ; but when he got up to shake hands with me, though there was the old friendly smile on his face, I was shocked to see what a change had come over him. I should hardly have known him if I had met him in the street—he looked so pale and worn—with his cheeks all sunk, and his eyes glowing like lamps. When he spoke, too, it was in such a hollow, weary tone, it made me quite unhappy.

“Why, sir,” says I, “you don’t look the same man ; I am afraid you have been

fretting down in this dull little hole. How is the chapel work going on ? ”

“ Oh, pretty well, Jem,” said he ; “ Bembridge’s parson left here some months ago for a better ‘ sphere ’ (which is Latin, you know, for better ‘ salary ’). Then they asked me to take his place, which I gladly did ; but I can’t say it is very encouraging, and it is quite true I *do* feel uncommonly dull and solitary here sometimes.”

And then I could not help saying, “ Well, sir, but is not that young lady coming down yet to take care of you ? ”

But he only shook his head, and turning round to the window, said, “ No, no, my man, that is all over ; but I am much obliged for your kind sympathy. I know you would make it all straight if you could, but I have just gone and done for myself as far as this world is concerned.”

“ But that is a big shame,” said I, firing up ; “ for with your leave, I make bold to say that there never was a man that better deserved the support and encouragement both of rich and poor, fair lady, or fine



gentleman, aye, or working man, than you."

"Much obliged to you, Woodford," he answered, "for your good opinion; but you see it is not shared by the folks who could do the most to help me to be a useful member of society. And if I have to put up with a little hard usage for the sake of the working men, it is no more than the best of your class have had to do, and have borne their troubles bravely without any whining."

"That's true," I said, thinking of the many men who had been or were still in prison for speaking the truth about the tyrannical government, and class legislation under which we were all living then. "So I wouldn't mind if it didn't seem to be taking your health away from you, for I am sure you must be doing a good deal of good here, sir."

"Oh, never mind my health; I shall pull through. And now I want to ask you what they say in London about this conference that Sturge and Miall have summoned to meet in Birmingham next month."

“Well,” I replied, “the man whom, as you know, I trust above all others, and who deserves that everybody *should* trust him—William Lovett—he says it is a fine thing, and has good hopes of it; though whether it really turns out of any use or not depends upon the way the O’Connor party choose to look at it. If *they* come down in force, I don’t think we or anybody else shall be much the better for it.”

“Do you think they will try to upset it, Woodford?” he asked.

“No, not exactly that, sir; but it is very likely that, as Feargus did not start it, and can’t play first fiddle, he will tell his men to keep it at arm’s length, ‘pooh-pooh’ the whole affair, and try to make it rather ridiculous in the eyes of the working classes.”

“But at all events don’t you think it is a fine attempt to make reconciliation between the middle and working classes, and to get justice for all?”

“Indeed, I do, Mr. Fletcher; I shall never forget when you first showed me

that new paper called the 'Nonconformist,' in which the editor, Edward Miall, was cracking up the cause of what *he* called 'Complete Suffrage,' but which in reality, as you know, was very like what we meant by Universal Suffrage. Ever since that I have watched him and his work with a great deal of respect and hope too, and now that he has got Joseph Sturge and Sharman Crawford to join with him, I think real good may be done. It is a grand thing to have middle-class men, and an M.P., once more standing up for us; it does so much to smooth away class prejudice, and get rid of that bitter fear and hatred of Chartists and Chartism that has done such a deal of harm."

"I suppose," put in Mr. Fletcher, "it is on that account Miall and Sturge proposed this new name."

"I should think so," said I. "But most of those men who first came out for the Charter, when William Lovett brought it out, seem to have crept back into their holes again. We don't hear much of Roe-

buck, or Daniel O'Connell, or even Joseph Hume, being willing to face the storm in favour of us poor workies, since that confounded Newport riot. Shall you go to the conference, sir?"

"I haven't been asked," said he, smiling; "but I'd go there or anywhere else to say a word for justice being done to fellows like you."

"Oh, if that is all," said I, "I think we shall all gladly send you as our delegate, if you can get a friend to lodge you in Birmingham, for we can't afford much for travelling expenses. They have got the Branch Society still formed here, though it hasn't been doing much lately; but I will get them together, and have you appointed in a trice."

"Oh," says he, "I can pay all travelling expenses. Don't trouble about that."

Aye, but "travelling expenses" were often a great difficulty in working many a scheme among us working men.

This proposal was received very heartily by our little knot of Chartists, who still

stood by one another (though they did not dare to make themselves much known in the neighbourhood); and Mr. Fletcher was duly elected as our representative to the Complete Suffrage Conference held in Birmingham in April, 1842.

There was not a man absent of us when he came back and told us what had been done, and I shall never forget the eager faces of our poor fellows, as we all sat round the table, and filled up the back forms and corners of our club-room at the "Red Dragon," or how they cheered him when he first came in, and as he went on with his discourse. It appeared that William Lovett, having cordially promoted the meeting, and Feargus, as I expected, having attempted to pooh-pooh it, there was a great majority of the right sort of men, all of them earnest, downright Chartists, who were pledged to the lips not to give up one of the six points, but to make every other concession possible to meet the views of our middle-class friends. Messrs. Miall, Sturge, Sharman Crawford,

J. Humphrey Parry (since made Serjeant Parry, a true friend of the people), the Rev. T. Spencer, of Hinton Charter House (near Bath), a Church of England clergyman, but a first-rate man, and Mr. Fletcher, were all equally conciliatory, and for three days a discussion went on, taking each of the six points in order. One after another they were urged by Lovett and the other Chartists, and one after another were being conceded by the middle-class folk; but among the latter was an eloquent, high-couraged, sturdy young Quaker from the North, a large manufacturer, and a very influential man already in his own district.

“The news of his coming made a great sensation among us,” said Mr. Fletcher, “and considerably encouraged us till we found that though giving us very valuable sympathy and support on many points, he was making a very dogged opposition to two or three articles of the Charter, which exasperated its supporters and made us all tremble a little for the fate of the conference. At last his objections to this and



that were all removed, except to the last point, which was Annual Parliaments. But the Chartists made a touching appeal to us and pressed this 'point' also, on the ground that they were already regarded in their respective localities with no little suspicion for having come to a middle-class conference on the subject; and it was stated that if they fulfilled the gloomy expectations of their friends at home, and gave up any one of the six points, they should be regarded as traitors to the cause, and on their return home would find they had lost all influence, and would be 'sent to Coventry' into the bargain."

They [i.e. the Chartist Delegates] had come to the conference in a spirit of faith and trust, in spite of no end of opposition, and even obloquy, among their constituents and the rest of the Chartists. They had come in fact, not exactly with their lives, but with their reputation—their whole social and political influence—at stake in the localities where they lived; all of them, of course, to some extent leading men, and



all of them therefore with a position that they would have been very loth to lose.

“Greatly to my surprise, I need not say,” continued our brave parson, “I was asked if I would move the adoption of this Annual Parliament Clause on these grounds, and though I didn’t particularly like the job, I felt the force of the men’s arguments, and pleaded for them to the best of my power. The result was all the middle-class opposition was withdrawn, the whole of the six points were carried, and even the eloquent young Quaker from Rochdale remained our friend.”

That young man’s name was John Bright, and it is pretty well known what he has done since to earn the gratitude of his countrymen.

“Then,” said Mr. Fletcher, continuing his narrative, “we wound it up with a magnificent meeting in the Town Hall, when Joseph Sturge, whose wisdom and courtesy, and broad popular sympathy, had so helped to secure the unanimity and success of the conference, presided over an

audience which filled every nook and corner of that spacious building. He spoke well as chairman, and was cheered to the echo. William Lovett, Henry Vincent, Bronterre O'Brien, Lowery, and others, all made admirable and stirring appeals, and I should think the Town Hall hadn't often rung with such enthusiastic cheers as answered them. Fancy my alarm when I found myself urged to second one of the resolutions, Mr. Thomas Spencer having gone home, and we being the only two clergymen who had attended the conference; but I can tell you, gentlemen," said Mr. Fletcher, "it was just the hardest task I had ever tried in my life, to stand up before such a meeting as that, and when I began I didn't know whether I was in the body or out of it. However, the audience were very kind and demonstrative, and clapped most generously, so that I soon recovered my senses, and only remember the infinite sense of relief with which I found my last words were being heartily cheered as I dropped into my seat."

“Then, sir,” said one of our men as the parson concluded amid *our* cheers, “you think the conference will help us to get the People’s Charter?”

“Yes, I do,” replied Mr. Fletcher, “more than anything else which has happened since you started it; because it will have lifted it up on to an entirely new platform, christened the movement with a new name,” (that, by the bye, was the only thing we did not like, and we told him so afterwards. We did *not* want a new name,) “got it out of the old rut, and will have made Members of Parliament look on it as something more than another name for violence and anarchy.”

He then told us that it was decided to call another conference towards the end of the year, of a more largely representative character if possible, when final steps should be taken for putting the whole subject before Parliament in their ensuing session. “To the second conference,” he continued, “the hopes of most Chartists will now be directed with very longing

eyes, and, as you know, great expectations are entertained with regard to the results. So that, gentlemen, is the upshot of what passed at our first conference. But I must not omit one curious and interesting thing which happened to me. I was introduced at the conference to a very fine fellow, named Arthur O'Neill, a working man and a delegate, and he told me all about his Christian Chartist Society, which they had formed after hearing of one in Scotland. It must have seemed a very queer title that, to all respectable middle-class Christians in Birmingham I have no doubt, when he first announced it, for I suppose their notion of Chartist and Chartism would be the very antipodes of Christianity. But I must say it took my fancy amazingly. For you see, friends, I had taken to Chartism just because I thought Christianity told me I ought (cheers); and when a very intelligent, modest, good-looking young fellow came up to me after one of the sittings of the conference, told me his name was O'Neill, and asked me if I would come and say a

few words some evening before I left to his little society, I got interested pretty quickly, and went on the Sunday afternoon (I was engaged every night, and was preaching for an old friend morning and evening on the Sunday, so that was my only opportunity). I prayed with them, and preached to them, and did a lot of 'talkee-talkee' with O'Neill and his committee besides. It seems he was an out-and-out Chartist, but he was also a firm believer in Christ and Christianity, and so he thought the two things might be united; and finding some Baptist or Methodist workmen of the same mind with himself, they formed this Christian Chartist Society. When it was first launched, respectable folks looked at them much as you would look at a mad dog. But they worked quietly on, 'instant in season and out of season,' always abounding in good works, and careful to give no offence. If a neighbour or a neighbour's child were ill, a 'Christian Chartist' was sure to be ready to run for the doctor or sit up to nurse all the night long. If help

were wanted for a burial, half-a-dozen Christian Chartists would volunteer to carry the coffin. If a fight had to be stopped or a quarrel prevented, there were Christian Chartists ready to do it. Whenever 'Good Samaritan' work in short was needed, some of these good fellows were always ready day or night to do it without fee or reward. 'And so you see,' said Arthur O'Neill to me, 'all the prejudice against us has been lived down, and we stand so well now in this town that we have only to go to any of the wealthy, benevolent men of Birmingham and tell them we want a little money for this or that, and we get it immediately.' Yes, yes, my Chartist brothers," concluded Mr. Fletcher, "Chartism is a fine thing, and O'Neill is a fine fellow. And Christ and Christianity are better still, in my opinion, whatever that's worth. Without them, I think, all our schemes and societies won't do us much good; but with them we may go ahead and be sure of victory." Didn't we give him a rousing cheer when he sat down!



I often wished to hear more of that young man and his good work; but unhappily about a year later, and before he could put it on a permanent basis, he was laid hold of by some of the magistrates who were off their heads with fright,—and, for something in a speech he had made, which they called sedition, was most unjustly sentenced at the Stafford Assizes, in the summer of 1842, to twelve months' imprisonment in Stafford gaol. Mr. Fletcher, I remember, read us a very interesting but very short letter which he had received from O'Neill while in gaol; but the young man never took much part in the Chartist movement again. He found a fine field for congenial work, however, in becoming minister of a Baptist chapel in Birmingham; and I've no doubt many of his Christian Chartists joined his congregation, and continued to carry on their useful works, and to be good Christians and staunch Chartists as well.

For myself I must say I liked this name, "Christian Chartist," immensely. I told



Mr. Fletcher he was as good a Christian Chartist as any of them, and that he had better start a Christian Chartist church at once, not for East Leigh only, but all England.

“Thank you, Jem,” said he, “but the Church of Christ is good enough for me. It can do all we want—if only it would do its duty—its political duty, among the rest.”

True enough, but then it don’t, thought I. Perhaps it will some day, yet.

“Another curious thing happened,” said Mr. Fletcher, when talking afterwards with Bembridge and myself in London about the conference, “as I was returning from Birmingham. While waiting on the platform for the train to Gloucester, I saw a young Chartist delegate doing the same, who had made one or two speeches at the conference that pleased me very much. So we began talking, and I suppose we should have travelled in the same carriage, but he intimated that he had a companion, and I saw nothing more of him till we got to Gloucester.”

ter and was preparing to mount the coach to Bristol [there was no line then between that town and Bristol]. Then he and his friend got up with me at the back, and he informed me that he had been arrested that morning by the gentleman sitting opposite us, under a warrant from the Bristol magistrates for taking part in a so-called seditious meeting some months before. He had kept out of the way hitherto, but they guessed he would be at the Birmingham conference, and despatched an officer."

"Poor beggar, he'll get twelve months," said one of my mates.

"I only hope they will let him have books then," replied Mr. Fletcher, "for he could make grand use of them. I don't know when I had been more pleased with a man's conversation than I was with his. And when I asked him where he got such capital notions from, he said, 'Well, chiefly from an American writer, a Dr. Channing's works.' This made me wonder what the writings were which had wrought so wholesomely on that young Chartist workman."

“I have all his works,” said the chairman of our Chartist Association. “Bembridge got them for me; and I shall be happy to lend them to you. But I should think that what your companion had got most good from, were one on ‘Self-Culture,’ and another on ‘The Elevation of the Labouring Classes.’” However, I admire nearly everything the man wrote, at least, that I have read. I’ve many a time blessed the day when Bembridge was cracking ’em up to us. The Doctor has a good deal to answer for, also, for any twist I may have got, as well as your Bristol Chartist friend, towards good or evil. I see too, that Henry Vincent, in a great speech he made the other day at Bath, referred to the same writer.”

“On my word, it grows interesting,” replied Mr. Fletcher, his eyes kindling up. “I must certainly read the man’s notions. I take your offer, with thanks. But what a terrible Radical the Yankee Doctor must be if his views breed up such thorough-paced Chartists!”

“And land them in Newport and Bristol gaols,” I added.

“No, no; Channing is no more of a Radical or Chartist than the founder of Christianity,” said our chairman, “but no less. He is no politician, i.e., not a party politician at all. But he seems to me to be trying all he can to do what you are doing every Sunday, Mr. Fletcher,—to apply Christianity to our mental and moral improvement as citizens and men, to raise us and our political communities nearer to God,—and if that’s Radicalism or Chartism, then the New Testament is pretty full of it. But that’s not what would land any fellow now-a-days in a gaol, though it would have done it a hundred years ago. Your Bristol friend must have gone in for club law a tidy little bit, I am afraid, before the magistrates could be down upon him.”

“What, man!” said I, rather crossly, “have you forgotten Warwick gaol? I should like to know what landed William Lovett there, if it wasn’t applying Christianity to politics. But there are a good

many fine fellows now-a-days," I grumbled out, thinking of Davie Roberts, and others as good as he, "who have lost all hope of getting the improvement you speak of except by club law. Worse luck for them, and the nation."

After all this chatter, however, about the Yankee parson's writings, I thought I would read them as soon as the chance offered. When I did read them, I didn't wonder at any working man (or gentleman either for that matter,) being the better all his life for having read them; and I'm going to be grateful, too, all my life that I heard of them, though I don't say I understood or cared for everything I found in them.

But there was another gloomy shadow had come over us at East Leigh before the dark and terrible days of August, 1842.

Not long after Mr. Fletcher had returned from that first Birmingham Conference, I met him one day in the street, carrying a carpet bag, as I was going home to my dinner. There was something up, I could see, that was very bad, but he hardly spoke

—just shook hands, squeezing mine pretty hard; said he was glad he had met me—“it was like ‘a whiff of the briny’ to a sick man,” and he’d write as soon as he could. Then he swung himself up outside the coach that ran between East Leigh and Taunton, and I looked after him, wondering. He did write, after a few days, from the fine old place where the young lady lived who he had once hoped would come and keep his home at East Leigh. He had been sent for, he said, to see her, but he feared “it was only to see her pass out of this world to the fairer, happier world to which, not to earth, she seemed properly to belong.”

What could a poor ignorant fellow like myself say to him in presence of such a sorrow? I could only quote his own words, which I had often treasured up as they came from his pulpit right to the hearts of myself and others; and he told me afterwards they were a help and strength to him, when thus echoed back to him,—as they had often been to me.



I was thinking very sorrowfully about him not long after, when the postman slipped a letter into my hand, in his handwriting, but it hadn't got the black seal I was expecting. When I saw the first words inside I jumped up, clapped my hands, and then gave God thanks—for it told me that the young lady was going to live, and not die, as her parents, rather than lose her, had given their consent to her marrying Mr. Fletcher, in spite of his Chartism and “conventicle shop;” and all was happiness and peace.

In due time the brave, good man brought home his bonny bride to a pretty little house he had taken for her on the outskirts of East Leigh, and a new beautiful life from that time dawned on him, after all his sacrifices and sufferings. I rather think we did give them both a warm reception when they came home, and I don't know which of the two looked the most pleased.

I hadn't very long, however, to enjoy the sight of my dear parson's happiness, or to profit by his teachings. My work



for Mr. Barnett was finished soon after, and he told me Mr. Grapnell wanted me back in town. He was very pleasant, and so were all the shop, and a lot of them and my Chartist pals actually invited me to a grand supper the night before I left, when Mr. Fletcher took the chair, and we were all as jolly as you please, though I was uncommonly sorry to be leaving them.

## CHAPTER V.

ON my return to town, my first visit, after seeing the dear old folks at Broadfield, and spending a day or two with them, was to hunt up Davie and his wife, but this proved a longer business than I expected. Things were not so pleasant, I found, as they had been; work had sometimes been rather short, Davie didn't keep quite so steady to his home, I am afraid, as in the early married days, and they had had to move into much less comfortable lodgings. This was the more unfortunate, as two little souls had been added to their circle, and poor Maggie's tell-tale face, as well as Davie's, looked rather pinched and careworn. Of course we had a deal of eager talk together, and I think I was of

some use to both husband and wife, so that I was able to harness into my old work in conjunction with Lovett with a tolerably easy conscience. Lovett, Bembridge, and other friends, by means of the National Association, had got into a much larger building than I left them in, having taken what was known as Gate-street Chapel, Holborn, which was re-christened as the "National Hall." Considerable sums of money were raised by the help of various liberal and public-spirited gentlemen; but unfortunately a debt of about 400*l.* remained after all expenses were paid, and that hung like a millstone round the neck of the association till the day of its death, crippling our efforts, and greatly contracting the sphere of our usefulness. The National Hall, which would hold about 2000 people, was opened in July, 1842, with a public festival. A Sunday-school had been opened, and Bembridge was one of the most regular teachers. The education given consisted of reading, writing, arith-

metic, grammar, and geography, with such other information as they were able to give. Lectures by various eminent men were frequently given, and altogether a considerable amount of good was done by this organization. Feargus O'Connor was now developing his Land Scheme, and getting money out of the pockets of many unfortunate dupes, while the attention of the working classes was of course diverted by the trail of this red herring from the pursuit of the great object for which so many sacrifices had been made and so much suffering endured. The state of the country at large continued to be very lamentable, and although there did not seem to be so much danger of political outbreaks or seditious and revolutionary proceedings as there had been, there was no little danger from the profound discontent and intense suffering among the great body of the industrial classes. I see that Thomas Cooper, in his autobiography, has powerfully depicted the state of things as he witnessed it, and as many thousands felt it.

Hence, during the summer of 1842, there was sterner business going on than peace-making, Sturge-and-Miall Suffrage conferences, or beneficent National Lovett-Association work. What was known far and wide as the terrible "Plug Plot" was spreading like wild-fire. The delegate meeting held in Manchester, on August 12, had resolved, by an immense majority, on encouraging the movement and promoting what was called the "Sacred Month," in which no work of any kind should be done "so as to see if that would bring Parliament (as they said) to its senses, and make them pass the Charter." Large bodies of men went from mill to mill in the factory districts, turning out all the hands, and taking the plugs from the boilers. It was whispered that the Anti-Corn League approved of these proceedings, believing they would help on a repeal of the infamous Corn Laws. At Bacup, August 12, there were 2000 men going about with sticks, turning out the mill-hands, and demanding provisions

from the shops. At Stalybridge, Dukinfield, Ashton, Hyde, and Denton, similar work went on. Every morning fresh news came to London ; and in many workshops, ours included, one man was paid by the rest to read the newspaper during our breakfast and dinner-hour.

One of the worst rows took place at Preston, where the military were called out, the Riot Act read amid showers of stones, and four men were shot dead in the streets, besides many being wounded. A large mill-owner at Stockport, a Mr. Bradshaw, who had locked his factory gates in the face of the mob, was beaten by them so badly that he had to take to his bed.

“ Military out again ! ” was the frequent exclamation in our shops of a morning, during those dismal days. Sometimes it was at Chisworth, sometimes at Blackburn, and then back again at Ashton. “ For fifty miles round Manchester,” Mr. Gammage says in his “ History of Chartism ” (p. 242), when summing up the sad

doings of the time, "the same excitement prevailed." Even ordinary workmen, bricklayers and others, were forced to stop work. And the worst feature, perhaps, of the whole affair was the extent to which these tumultuous bodies of men begged or demanded and got money and food from large numbers of the middle and trading classes. Night after night excited groups of men throughout the rest of the country and in London gathered at their respective Chartist meeting-places, and, rubbing their hands exultingly, would exclaim, "Now's the time. It's come at last. Go it, my Lancashire lads! If we don't get the Charter now, we never shall!"

My old friend, Jem Burt, had turned out a capital fellow—smart and handy with his tools, and with a head on his shoulders. He attended classes at the Mechanics' Institute, Chancery Lane, and often came to lectures and discussions at the National Hall; but, like so many more good fellows, he had no patience with



wrong—couldn't bear to wait for Lovett's slow moves for the Charter, and was a great admirer—not, indeed, of O'Connor, but of Thomas Cooper; and was fairly swept off his legs by that able and earnest, but at that time hot-headed Chartist leader's remarkable eloquence the first time he heard him. McDoual, also Leech, Campbell, and other determined and honest Chartist chiefs, had immense attractions for him, and a fatal influence over him. There was one magnet, however, that I thought would keep him from any very wild extravagance. He was desperately in love with Maggie's younger sister, a pretty, quiet, but very delicate girl; and she was uncommonly fond of him. If he could have gone on steadily they might have been married in a year or two.

Burt, however, was wild to hear Cooper again, and to go to all his meetings; he was, in fact, quite unsettled by the state of the times, and by what Mr. Fletcher called his hero-worship. Thomas Cooper

seemed more to him a great deal when this Plug Plot broke out than poor little Nelly Thatcher. One night he came flying up my stairs, just as I was thinking of going to bed, after teaching at the National Hall all the evening, and, shaking my hand frantically, he exclaimed, "Give me joy, old fellow! The Executive have agreed to send me down to the Potteries for a week; they want to connect us, don't you see, with the 'Sacred Month.' Cooper is pounding away there like a dozen, and wants a representative of the London Chartists; so, praise the pigs, I'm off to-morrow morning!"

And to the Potteries he went, joyful enough. Coming back was a very different matter.

All through Staffordshire the men were up, and it was no joke when those colliers and ironworkers lost patience, and began to take the law into their own hands. It was on August 7 that the great meeting on Mottram Moor had been held, when the resolution was passed that all labour

should cease until the People's Charter became the law of the land, and within a week, in nearly all the great towns of Lancashire, thousands upon thousands of the working classes had carried the same resolutions amid deafening cheers. It was just a week afterwards—that is, on Monday, August 15—when Burt found himself set down by the coach at the door of an inn in Hanley, in the Potteries, after riding for miles every now and then through crowds of excited colliers, who were brandishing sticks, and swearing it was time rich men gave poor men their rights, and Jem said, in the few lines I had from him, “How I longed to jump down and join them!”

As soon as he got something to eat, away he went to a place called the Craven Bank, where he was told Cooper was to hold a meeting that night. Immense numbers of men with grimy faces and sturdy limbs, thick sticks, and queer speech, were pressing and jostling to get as near the speaker as they could. Jem was soon in the thick of the crowd and

listening with throbbing heart to all the vehement and stirring words poured out by the fiery orator. All the day long Hanley, Burslem, Stoke, and Longton had been wild with excitement, and the tradesmen had begun putting up their shutters long before evening. All sorts of reports of what the mob were doing in different places were flying about. Small bodies of troops, accompanied by the magistrates, were marching about; but just as they were sent for to one spot where things looked dangerous, mounted messengers came, urgently demanding their presence somewhere else. Both men and officers were harassed to death.

Cooper's lecture was announced for eight o'clock in the large room of the Crown Inn at Hanley, but by six p.m. the crowd was so great that the committee asked him to go over to the bank and address them there. By this time it was pretty certain that there had been serious rioting and destruction of property in several places.

Knowing all this, Cooper dwelt strongly in his address on the need of keeping within the law, and declared that they who broke it were not the friends, but the enemies of freedom. But when he came to denounce the crimes of the rich, and the oppression and tyranny of the governing classes, with all his burning eloquence, Burt said that he, like thousands around him, felt ready to go anywhere, and do anything that might help to overthrow the gigantic wickedness under which they suffered. Men who had gone through what the workmen of the potteries and the manufacturing districts generally had been suffering for many a day, were, of course, as ready as gunpowder to explode when such a torch was set to it.

Cooper closed the meeting at dusk, but the crowd did not disperse. Every one was asking, "What next?" All seemed to feel that after such an appeal, and now that they were all there in their strength, something must be done to follow it up.

"We *must* make a *beginning*, mates,

somewhere !” cried a man on the bank, close to Burt, in a voice that rang through the air like a trumpet, and thousands of voices shouted “bravo !” cheering with a great roar. Then another man cried, “We must show our tyrants that we *can* reach them, aye, in spite of all their red-coats and police !” And again the cheers boomed out. “Down with the accursed magistrates ! They are the first of our tyrants to be struck !” and, while this was being cheered more lustily than ever, two pistol-shots were fired, and hundreds of Hanley men shouted, “Down with Parker ! To hell with old Parker !” and there, in the gathering gloom, in another instant, that vast, angry, maddened multitude were hurrying away to the house of Mr. Parker, a Hanley magistrate.

Happily he and his family got warning just in time, and escaped to Burslem. Burt said he never could have believed he should have lived to be one of a huge mob engaged in setting fire to the house of a peaceable man, who had certainly never



injured him. But he said he felt at the time as if he were being swept along in a "Holy War" against all tyrants; that it was, indeed, time the reign of tyranny and the years of down-trodden misery should come to an end; that, as the man on the bank had said, they must make a beginning somewhere, and that if they struck a blow to the best of their ability, who could tell how mighty their example might prove, until the revolution swept over the whole land, and England once more was free! As he said on his trial, when, in a few simple, and very touching words, he tried to make out the best case for himself he could, "No one who has not been in the midst of an immense and excited crowd can have any idea how catching their madness is, and how you seem to lose hold on yourself, and to become merely part of a huge body, rushing here and there without any will of your own, but full of the feeling that makes every one shout and roar, and perhaps fight, burn, or destroy." I know that is true. I have felt something the



same more than once, as if I were part of a huge monster, like a wild elephant, but with the teeth of a lion, and the rage of a mad bull. And, as I told poor Jem, I did not so much blame him for being carried away with the mob, as for going among them at all at the first. Yet who would not have wanted to hear Cooper speak that night? Certainly he was most to blame. But then he hardly knew the extent, I suppose, of his own power. So Jem went at the work of destruction with a will, joined as lustily as the maddest among them in the yells of triumph with which the thick darkness was soon lighted by the lurid flames shooting up from the magistrate's doomed mansion, and then rushed off with the infuriated riotors, when that work was finished, to surround Dr. Vale's house at Longton. There also, happily, the family had got away in time, but the obnoxious magistrate had a narrow escape. And now began a scene which has so often been both the saddest in itself, and the cause of infinitely worse evils and crimes

than ever would have been committed, but for the devilish spirit inspired by drink. Some of the foremost of the mob, before the house was fired, broke into the doctor's cellar, knocked off the necks of the bottles by hundreds, and soon, to Burt's infinite horror and disgust, he saw numbers of his fellow-patriots in a state of beastly drunkenness. Those who had drunk, but not enough to be stupefied, rushed at the work of destruction with wilder devilry than ever. Not only Dr. Vale's mansion, but other dwellings in the neighbourhood were quickly in flames from top to bottom. Soon terrified women and children, half naked, ran shrieking past, flying for their lives through the flames and the crowd, into the darkness; and then, as the oaths, curses, and shouts rang louder and louder, mingled at last with cries of "The soldiers! the soldiers!" Burt stopped in his course, drew out of the mob, and began to ask himself if all this frightful business was indeed the commencement of a reign of Freedom, Justice, and Peace.

The soldiers did come ; too late to prevent incalculable mischief and misery, but in time to prevent that mischief spreading far and wide. Jem Burt heard them coming, when, long after midnight, dispirited, and ready to drop with fatigue, with a vague, terrible feeling of guilt and remorse on his mind, and his thoughts flying through the darkness at last to the quiet village of Broadfield sleeping peacefully, he was trying to creep back to his inn unobserved either by rioters or the military. In vain.

So long as the captain of the little company of soldiers was uncertain in the darkness whether he might not have to charge a fighting mob, he kept his men well together; but when it became clear, as they came near the light of the burning houses, that the rioters, having had notice of the approach of the military, were taking to their heels, he gave orders to capture as many prisoners as his men could secure and keep. Unhappily for Burt, he was one of the first observed by an active

young corporal. Then he found himself caught as he stumbled along, bound, and handed over to the guard, almost before he knew what had happened.

Thomas Cooper had wisely yielded to the urgent advice of his friends when they saw how matters were going, and started about midnight for Macclesfield on foot (as no one would lend him a gig), accompanied by two young men, who were sure they knew the way. His object was to catch the train for Manchester the next morning, and so be present at the Chartist delegate meeting in that town.

Of his adventures that dismal night he has given a graphic account in his autobiography;<sup>1</sup> also of the proceedings at the delegate meeting. But to follow up the further events of that sad and memorable time would lead me too far afield. He was arrested not long after for his share in the scenes which had been taking place in the Potteries, and narrowly escaped

<sup>1</sup> "The Life of Thomas Cooper." Written by himself. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

transportation for setting fire to Dr. Vale's and Mr. Parker's houses, when he was many miles away. But he got two years' imprisonment in Stafford gaol for "sedition and conspiracy."

It was during that imprisonment, of which he also gives a striking narrative (as, indeed, he does of his whole career), that he wrote his remarkable poem, "The Purgatory of Suicides;" but, like William Lovett and many other political prisoners, he was at first so hardly used, that his health gave way, and had he not secretly obtained the means of writing to Thomas Duncombe, M.P. (that staunch friend of the people's rights), he would probably never have come out of the gaol alive, and would certainly have written no poetry, for he was not allowed pens, ink, paper, or books till his case, with all its attendant hardships, was brought forward in the House of Commons.

Still he had done a world of mischief, though his intentions were worthy of any true patriot. And long after he had left gaol in triumph, and was living and working

happily at home and in the great world, some of those who had been goaded by his resistless eloquence into deeds of violence, not at Hanley alone, were wearing out their lives in chain-gangs in the colonies. For the act recently passed by Sir George Grey, was brought to bear heavily on these rioters. Jem was tried with the rest, and sent across the seas, after one heart-breaking interview with poor Nelly Thatcher and the rest of us. Nelly couldn't get over it, for, as I said, she was of a very delicate constitution, and before Jem had been gone three years, she was sleeping in Broadfield churchyard. It was sorrowful news to send to Sydney, and it was a sad trouble to Maggie and her mother. Maggie had loved the weakly little sister with great love, as, indeed, she seemed to love all whom she cared about, more or less, even her reprobate old father, as far as he'd let her. And even he came to be kind to her a bit at last, after they had stood together by Nelly's dying-bed. But all these troubles were a black shadow on her heart for many a day.

Davie Roberts, happily for him, was out of that hole. He had learnt his lesson, but, among other of my friends, he felt the pinch of those dark days. Wages were lower, and sometimes there was no work for him at all. Many a talk had I listened to in which men were expressing very audibly their dissatisfaction with the existing state of things. At the meetings which were held by different trades there were some very rash and violent notions uttered, with threats of vengeance for what the men knew to be the wrongs under which they were labouring; but sometimes uncommonly good sense was talked. I remember Kelso making a fine speech one night at a lodge meeting about the necessity for workmen to get better educated in their trades. After talking about the bad state of trade, and the Stafford Assizes, and the Charter, and how far the masters and governing classes ought to find work for us, he went on,—“Why, you know, mates, in old times the journeyman seemed to belong to his master, and really did in



the old feudal castles, where tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, &c., were all serfs of the baron; and then in the towns, in the trade guilds, you would find the master sitting side by side with his journeymen, teaching them all he knew. But masters, now-a-days, don't know much (A laugh), and, therefore, can't teach the men; but, for all that, they can't get it out of their heads that those under them belong to them all the same, and that not one in their employment has any right to say a word to them, and that nobody outside has any right to say a word for them, any more than if they were out-and-out their slaves (Great applause). Now, I don't like the word 'master,' it smacks a little too much of serfdom and despotism to please me. But, mind you, when it means a 'teacher,' as it used to once, among handicraftsmen, and as it does still for schoolboys, then I don't object. Nothing I have liked better all my life than to find a man who could be my master in that sense. If a man can and will teach me

anything, I don't care who he be—employer or journeyman, lord or chimney-sweep—then I'm his obedient pupil, and much obliged to him (Modified applause). I heard a gentleman tell a good story the other day of how he was travelling outside a stage-coach, with a man on the box talking with the coachman in a very flashy, conceited sort of way about the nonsense of orders of nobility, and saying that he had travelled with Earl Ducie in a railway carriage the other day, and looked at him from head to foot, and didn't think he looked a much better sort of man than himself, after all; 'but then, you know, coachman,' said my fellow-traveller, 'I never did see a better man than myself, did you?' 'I thought,' said the gentleman, 'that he must be a good one, to be sure of that, but I could see he was only a seedy sort of chap; and then I made bold to remark that I thought the speaker was about the most unlucky man I ever met with. He seemed quite taken aback; didn't utter a word all the rest of the way; perhaps he was sulky,

perhaps it gave him and coachy such a deal to think of; that they could do nothing else till they got to the journey's end.' (A laugh.) Now, don't you see, mates," continued Kelso, "the thing we most want in this world *is* to find men who are better than ourselves, who *can* teach us, and give us a wrinkle or two, not only in our trades, but in a good many other matters also? It's only nasty conceited folks, fellows always wanting to be cocks o' the walk, that can't bear any to be better than themselves. Why not use your play-time to get a better knowledge of your trades, and of the real principles on which you have to work? A man who doesn't understand what he's doing, and only just does what he's told, and in the way that it's shown to him, after all is but a poor stick, tho' he mayn't be a knobstick, but a downright honest fellow." (Some laughter, hissing, and applause.)

When the men were talking together after Kelso sat down, I heard one of my shopmates saying,—

“Aye, but there’s a bit of truth in some of that jabber. Don’t you see it’s all very well with us when in the shop, or jobbing about, as long as we’ve only got to keep on the square, and the mitre will serve; but when it comes to bevels and curves, and getting your centres right, and so on, then your rule of thumb is just the devil to pay, and no mistake.”

The men near him laughed, and some said,—

“Right you are, Tom; we’ll go bail for that.”

Others growled, and said,—

“It was all nonsense. They had got eyes in their heads, and supposed they could see where to cut.”

“Ah!” said Kelso, turning on them, “but I suppose you can’t, unless the foreman stands by you half the day!”

“Gammon!” cries one of the grumblers. “What d’ye mean?”

“Mean! Why, you know as well as I do, that I had to nurse you all the time you were putting up that hip-roof last week in

the Old-street-road. I couldn't trust you to cut one of those rafters by yourself."

The man turned away very sulky, but the rest of us knew it was all true, and only laughed. Kelso said to me afterwards, as we were walking home,—

"You see, Woodford, in many trades what men want is to learn how to make models. They ought to be brought up to make working-drawings for, and also from, models in wood, tin, zinc, &c., because, don't you see, they would then learn how to grasp the shapes and sizes of the various objects which they are required to make."

"Yes," said I, "and all that, I suppose, would help us in working to scale."

"Of course. You found that working to scale is one of a man's greatest difficulties."

"Well, it's easy enough, Mr. Kelso, as you know, to work on a quarter-scale drawing, for most of us, I suppose, soon learn that then a quarter-inch stands for a foot. But when you come to talk of a three-eighths scale, for instance—" and I

stopped, looking very dismal, for I remembered one or two plaguy rows over that figure.

Kelso could not help laughing at my wry face, and said, as we parted at the corner of the street,—

“Why, I don’t believe one man in a dozen would be able to make out his three-eighths of an inch to the foot, or, for that matter, be able to take the dimensions required for his own job from any drawing.”

“More shame, Mr. Kelso, for those who had the teaching of us.”

“Well, you’ve hit the nail there, Woodford,” said he, over his shoulder; then added, with a bitter sort of chuckle, “And how many of ’em would have cared to learn anything if they had had the chance?”

Ah, said I to myself, there’s the rub. But we must catch ’em when young. However, that hint about making models I found one of the best wrinkles he had ever given me.

Now I know there is a good deal of truth, also, in what Kelso said about masters

when he was talking to us that night, and I know there is plenty of fault may be found in the way they treat the men. But when workmen become masters, I am sorry to say I have seen them turn against the men, and drive them harder and treat them worse than born gentlemen. I know it's only *natural* we should do so, but still I think it is a bad nature; and I have tried always pretty hard myself to keep a lump of love for the men somewhere in my own heart, and to respect them and show I respected them unless they did what was disrespectful. But then, again, I've seen what I didn't see so clearly then, that the men themselves are often a great deal to blame for the way they get used, and as I've more than once said to them since, "If we didn't spend so much of our wages in drink, and got a little more education, and kept ourselves generally more like the middle-class folks both in manners and conversation, we should certainly be treated more respectfully by the employers."



## CHAPTER VI.

I AM quite sure that many a time disputes, and even strikes, would be avoided if employers were in the habit of treating the men more respectfully, and if the men deserved it. So many of those fights between Labour and Capital (as they are called) would never take place but for misunderstandings, and these often grow out of want of mutual respect. I never can understand why the capitalists and the workmen should not settle their differences with regard to wages, just as friendly like as merchants and brokers settle the terms on which they are to buy and sell when they meet on 'Change. As a master builder, now, I have to go and buy my wood of the timber merchants, and of

course I want to get it as cheap as I can, and they want to get as good price for it as they can, and if we can't agree there is no bargain made; but then we don't quarrel about it, and very likely next time we meet there is business done between us. The only reason why it should not be so between the employers and their work-people seems to me the ignorance of one another's real position, and the want, as I said, of mutual respect. But at the time I'm speaking of, I often felt as mad against the masters and well-to-do folk generally, as most of my mates. I thought nearly all the fault was on their side, and didn't think how hard they or their fathers must have been working and saving, and how many comforts they must have denied themselves before they could have come into their property and got the whip hand of us working men. Since I became an employer myself I've noticed that at least two-thirds or more of all employers, or their fathers, all over the kingdom, were only journeymen once, and that they were

saving while others were spending, working with their hands and brains while the rest were idling or worse. And if it had not been for their savings workmen couldn't be set to work and get wages. So that, I see, working men owe a deal of thanks to the capitalist, and, instead of grudging him fair profits, should look on him as their best friend for getting capital together. It opens one's eyes to many things to change places with other people. Still, I don't mean to say but what there's been a deal of injustice and selfishness that has helped to keep down the workmen and labourers, especially in the way the laws have been made and worked, and the way in which the upper-class folk have got hold of all the land. And then, again, I see it isn't merely by working and saving that the masters have got their capital. They get a deal of it together on credit. Only others must have saved, or nobody would have any money to lend them.

But, though I'm as sure as I live that there's been a deal of wrong done in these

matters, I don't feel so sure as I used to do about all the remedies. Those who come after me, I hope will have had a better education than I had, and be able to put things rather more on the square.

However, good advice, come from where it may, don't fill the belly, and many were the supperless nights when men, women, and children had to go to bed with little enough for that day, and not knowing where to get a bit for the next. Yet, somehow or another, throughout all these bad times, there was generally a few coppers for the beer. It was in times like these, however, that men found the value of having formed their Trades Unions; and perhaps this is the place to mention some very good remarks I heard Rufford make one night at a meeting of his trade, when he was trying to draw in a lot of journeymen engineers to join their society. Rufford, I should say, had been very quiet since his imprisonment, and I was afraid at one time that from sheer want of excitement he would be going to the bad, for he'd sit and soak for

hours together at the "public," and never seemed to care much about anything. However, he was a right good fellow at bottom, as I always thought, and he got out of this state after a time, when his master had given him a difficult job down at their works at Greenwich, and let him contract, himself, for a part of it. It all turned out very well; the master was both satisfied and pleased, advanced his wages, and on the strength of this, and from a real wish, I believe, to lead a steady life, he took a fancy to a good girl at the house where he lodged at Greenwich, and straight away married her. All this, however, didn't make him appear less interested in the advancement of his fellow-workmen, but more so, I think; and what he was saying the night I spoke of was something like this: "Trades Unions protect the masters from bad workmen, and the public from bad work. If the men were ground down one after another to starvation wages they would of course degenerate in skill, strength, and general ability for turning

out a good day's work. Besides this, they would at length, in many cases, be driven by discontent, and perhaps desperation, to acts of violence; and we should have plenty of Whiteboyism or Rockites in this country as well as in the Green Island. In fact, we need not be surprised if Captain Swing, with his matches and blazing stacks, appeared amongst the industrial classes if ever they were brought as low as the agricultural labourers were in 1830; and they *would* be, without Trades Unions. Those wretched labourers, with their eight or nine shillings a week, could never have been brought to that pass if they could have refused to work for less than twelve or thirteen, and had had a Trades Union to back them up. (Applause.) And then only see what a corporate, and so to say, brotherly spirit is created among workmen by these Unions; how much the knowledge that they belong to a Society for mutual help raises and dignifies a man. Why, even a militia man, when he has got his uniform on, is on his mettle not to disgrace the

regiment he belongs to. What a benefit it would have been to agricultural labourers, morally as well as in regard to wages, if they belonged to an organization for mutual protection and support; and what a fine thing it is for a fellow to say: 'There, I have been paying my money into the Society for many a day, and if *I* don't want help from it, that will be because I am doing well myself, and then my money will go to help some poor devil who wants it more nor I do.' Don't you see, gentlemen," said Rufford, "the capital of the employers enables them to hold out so much longer in any dispute with the workmen than they (the men) can singly; and unless they have raised capital by their weekly subscriptions they have nothing to fall back upon. Trades Unions, in fact, *compel* employers to put such a price on their goods as will allow of a decent livelihood in the shape of fair wages to the workman. If customers can't or won't afford that price, it would be better the trade should be given up and that capital



should go into other channels. This applies not only to one trade, but to the building and all other trades; if houses cannot be built for less than fair wages will allow of, the landlords must lower rents or the population must go somewhere else; anything better than that the workman, whose labour is essential to everything, should be ground down to starvation wages. (Applause.) So with regard to long hours; working men, without Trades Unions, would be compelled to slave away for a much larger portion of the day, and all the while a lot of other men would be out of work because their mates are doing too much. No, no! what I say is, a fair day's wage for a fair day's work, and brotherly union among the workmen to put them on a footing for getting their dues. (Applause.) But then, mind you, it must be a *fair* day's work, and a day of *good* work. If we keep up wages, my mates, we must keep up a good standard of workmanship too. And I'll tell you one thing more before I've done; it's true that only

by getting capital, as I said just now, can we meet the employers on equal terms ; but I am not sure but what if we could employ our capital by going into business on our own account, and have workshops of our own, instead of going on strike and spending the money for supporting one another while at play, it might be better for us all. However, that is a big subject, and I won't go into it now, for the good reason that I don't quite understand it myself (Laughter). But this I do understand, that, if we are to do any good for ourselves and for one another and wives and children, we must keep ourselves sober and steady, and lay by money for the rainy day." (Considerable applause, amidst which Rufford resumed his seat.)

Turning round to come away, wasn't I surprised at seeing Mr. Fletcher just behind me, with that pleasant smile on his fine face which was sunshine to all who met it.

"Just run up, Master Jem, for a week, to see how I like a set of good fellows in

Camden Town, who've asked me to come and be their shepherd in my poor way, and for them to see if they like me. 'Fair play,' you know 'is a jewel,' and what's sauce for the goose, &c. So we are taking stock of each other, you see." Didn't I hope he'd make a match of it with them! and two of his best sermons he gave them the next Sunday, which I took good care to hear.

"And how's the missus, sir?" said I, as we walked away together. The brightness on his face when he answered, showed me that all was right there, and that he was as happy as ever I could wish him to be.

"But, Woodford," he continues, "I tracked you out to have a talk with you to-night, and I'm exceedingly glad I heard your friend's little speech, and I've long felt sure Trades Unions are absolutely necessary in the present state of things. But then I hear them denounced by the upper class because they interfere so tyrannically with a man's right to make the best bargain with his employer that he can.

You know, Woodford, it does seem a shame that a clever workman shouldn't be allowed to earn as much as he can. . . ."

"Ah, but Mr. Fletcher," I cried, interrupting him, "that's all a hum! Trades Unions only fix what you call a minimum wage, a sum which they say every man is worth whom they admit into the Union. They don't say a man shan't earn more if he can get it!"

"Don't they? Do you mean to tell me there'd be no jealousy in a shop if it were known that one or two of the men were receiving 20 per cent. more than the rest? unless in some very exceptional cases?"

I was rather taken aback at this, for I knew it was so. But I answered, "Well, sir, I can't say but what there would be jealousy. But there's no Trades Union rule to forbid the thing."

"Perhaps not, my friend, but public opinion, backed up, it may be with a little mild persecution or even rattening, is stronger than rules, eh, Woodford? And you know men have refused to work, struck

out-right, because of what they called the injustice of paying one man more than another." I couldn't deny it. "But," he continued, "there's another matter. There's no use, my dear fellow, blinking facts. One does hear such complaints of the idleness, negligence, and worse, of working men, and I've seen so much of it myself during my life-time, that I'm almost afraid to say a word for them lest I get my head snapped off."

"What kind of bad conduct, sir, is it?"

"Well, here's a man comes to do a job; he comes late, finds he has not got all the tools, or stuff, he wants, goes back to get them, spends an hour or two looking at his work, half-an-hour more in chatting with the servant-girls—goes away early, saying the job can't be finished to-day—and worst of all, he's charged with *making* work for some other operative or himself, at a later time, by leaving a leak here or a chink there. Why, Woodford, only since I've been in town this time a physician, whom I met the other day at dinner, when

I was cracking up my workmen-friends, told us that as he sat by a patient's bedside he noticed a man at work on the roof of the opposite house. Presently the man crept along to the roof of the next house, and with his own eyes he saw him loosen and remove one of the slates on it, and then creep back again. Of course, when the next rain comes, there'll be an outcry, and our friend the slater will be sent for."

"That's very bad, Mr. Fletcher, if it's true. But perhaps the man saw that the slate was loose, and would be blown down on somebody's head; and he may have told the people when he got down. And before I thought much of that story, or of any of those conundrums one hears of against our class, don't you think it would be only fair to cross-examine the witnesses, and hear the defence of the accused, eh?"

"All right, Jem," said he; "if we could get at them, and bring them face to face. But we can't; and all that we can do is to sift every story we hear, and let each party

and folks of both classes know what is thought and said of them."

"And give each the chance, as far as we can, of defending themselves, sir."

"Yes, and speak up for those who can't speak for themselves."

"That's it, Mr. Fletcher! and I know the workies will have a good word from you. But there it is—bother, we don't all deserve a good word. Of course, there are bad as well as good among us, and plenty of the bad, I'm afraid. But so there are in all ranks; and I can tell you a secret. The masters themselves are sometimes to blame for the idleness of the men. Did you never hear of their sending a man to do a job, and telling him perhaps he'll have to 'go in the hospital'?"

"No!"

"Well, they do; and when a man gets a hint of that kind he knows he mustn't get through his work too quickly, or there'll be nothing more for him to do at present. But, mind, I do say there's a deal that's unfair and dishonest among us journey-



men, even towards one another. Much more one may expect it towards well-to-do folk, who are always supposed by Jack Plane & Co. to have no end of cash, and to be all the better for being bled a little." Mr. Fletcher laughed, and I added, "Yes, there's a droll side to the devil's work, but it seems to me, sir, the gentlefolks who blame us all so bitterly, and sometimes so deservedly, ought to ask themselves what they are doing, or what their fathers did, to teach us to keep the Eighth commandment, or any commandments at all."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Fletcher, rather sternly. "What have a few hundred thousand Sunday-schools been about, then, I should like to know? Did you never hear of them, Woodford?"

"Yes, sir," said I; "but who teaches the teachers?" Mr. Fletcher looked very grave over it, but we had a rare good walk in the Regent's Park together, and he even came and took a cup of tea at my lodgings, when I got Davie to come too, and they liked one another immensely; and Mrs.

Taylor brought up some sausages and mashed potatoes, and we were so jolly. We talked, among other things, about the slater and "going in the hospital," and I remember Davie saying, "Ah, but the plumbers are the fellows to make work for their mates; and one of 'em told me a few days back that they and their masters between 'em, crib bits of lead and old taps, and call it 'plunder.'" I guess we all laughed, though it was a dirty business to laugh over; and afterwards Davie said, when Mr. Fletcher asked him more about the whole system,—

"Why, you see, sir, I hold that the masters are more to blame than the men, because they're naturally looked up to by their workmen, and if they encourage the men to 'plunder,' and allow so much for all that's brought in, the men feel their consciences quieted, and think it's all right because the master takes all those odds-and-ends into account when he's giving his estimate for the work. But I'm bound to think it's thieving for all

that." In which view we all agreed, and then I got Davie to give us a bit of sing-song, for he had a fine voice, and it was a rare treat to hear him.

Since then, tho' I've become a master or employer myself, I do think the masters are most to blame, not only because they are looked to as an example, but because they ought to know better than the men, except indeed that they were generally only workmen once, themselves. But when they tell a man, as Davie allowed, and as I know they sometimes do, that he must not hurry over a job he's sent to, because work is slack, we can't wonder if, when they want to put on the steam, they find the man has learnt his lesson of dawdling only too well, and refuses to be pushed. As a very sensible customer of mine, who was buying a house of me out by Hackney Downs, said to me, when we were talking of this matter (and he was a thorough gentleman, fair to all parties, all round): "If a master sells himself to his men, he mustn't wonder if, some day, they

turn on him. If he makes them cheat his customers, he must expect that they'll cheat on their own account (himself among others), when they've learnt their lesson." Of course. And I think the root of the evil is (as this gentleman afterwards said), the employers' over-anxiety to be rich. If they would be content with moderate profits, they wouldn't be tempted or driven to all this dirty work. I can see that more clearly since I went into business for myself. But then, I see, also, that the great capitalists often can and do afford to take less profit than the smaller ones, and so they beat the little masters out of the field. It isn't always that employers cheat or put the screw on the men, "in haste to be rich," but just to keep themselves from being drowned. So it's a muddle which ever way you look at it, and I can't see my way out of it at present.

Rufford says Co-operation would cure it all. Mr. Fletcher says: "Yes, Co-operation plus Christianity, not minus Christ."

If you don't understand that, I do, because I've learn't Algebra, as you had better do, and because I go to hear Mr. Fletcher preach, as you had better do also.

When Mr. Fletcher and Davie were going away that night, and we were finishing up our talk on the doorstep, Mr. Fletcher said, as he shook hands with me,—

“I think you and Mr. Roberts urge a good deal more for your fellow-workmen behind their backs than you'd like to say to their faces. What do you say now to scamped work? You never heard of such a thing, I daresay.”

Davie pulled such a long face that I burst out a-laughing, but I clenched my fists, and cried, “Drat the beggars, Mr. Fletcher! I wish all scamps in every trade were tarred and feathered; only, perhaps, there wouldn't be honest men enough to master the rogues; but I never could abide scamped work, either as journeyman or employer, and I do know there's a rare lot of it.”

Davie lit his pipe, and looked at the stars. (I always liked better looking at them, by-the-bye, without the pipe.)

“But, dear Mr. Fletcher,” I whispered, “did you never hear of scamping *parsons*, who bought their sermons and sold their prayers?”

He broke into a merry laugh; and so ended that happy evening, and, soon after came the darkest days of all.

Since those times I’ve known and heard of many noble-hearted clergymen, both among Church and dissenting folks, who seem to me to be doing a deal of good. But there will never be any of them that could be to me what Edward Fletcher was. He was Bunyan’s Christian, Faithful, and Great Heart all in one, *I* think. But I durstn’t, for my life, let him know that I thought such a deal of him; or he would most likely have cut me for ever after, as a toady and a fool.

## CHAPTER VII.

It will be remembered that when Mr. Fletcher came back to East Leigh from the Joseph Sturge "Complete Suffrage Conference," held in the spring of 1842 at Birmingham, he told us that another and more thoroughly representative conference was to be held in the following December, and which was ultimately attended by between 400 and 500 delegates. Accordingly great preparations were made for it in all quarters among the Chartists and their generous sympathizers in the middle-class. Joseph Sturge, Sharman Crawford, M.P., Edward Miall, Arthur Albright, the Rev. Thomas Spencer, rector of Hinton-Charterhouse (a truly large-hearted man according to my notion), and a few other brave good men



among the gentry who had originated or welcomed the "Complete Suffrage" movement, came again to the front. William Lovett and his party were heartily supporting it. But Feargus O'Connor, Julian Harney, the "Rev." William Hill, and the whole brood of physical force partisans were up and doing, and working with all their might and main to get a majority of their friends at the approaching meeting. This, however, they would not have had, nor would much harm, perhaps, have been done, but for a fatal mistake, when the conference opened, on the part of Sturge and his supporters; for, unhappily, they were ill advised enough to insist on the bill embodying the six points of the Charter which they had drafted, but which they called the "Bill of Rights" (in order to avoid the hindrance to the movement caused by the name of the People's Charter), being made the first and principal subject of discussion in the conference. Even Lovett objected to this; for, as the father of the Charter, and a profound be-

liever both in the wisdom of the name and the righteousness of the movement which he had started, he of course could not see the justice or expediency of throwing it all aside for the sake of a brand new document now first brought forward; while the O'Connorites of course were not only justly indignant at the proposal, but mightily pleased at the chance it gave them of upsetting the Sturgites, whom they certainly regarded with anything but charitable feelings, while O'Connor himself was boiling over with ill-concealed resentment at any one presuming to take the lead out of his own hands. Lovett, however, with Mr. Fletcher (who was again delegated to represent us), and all their party, in the interests of peace, consented to a conciliatory motion proposed by a very able young man of the name of Somers, from the west of Scotland, to the effect that the Bill of Rights, &c., should be discussed *pari passu* (as I believe the lawyers say) with the Charter, that is, clause by clause, until the whole was settled, neither taking precedence of the other. To

this reasonable proposal, however, unfortunately, Mr. Sturge and his friends could not agree, and Somers' amendment was lost. Then came a vote on the resolution proposed by Sturge and Co. for the Bill of Rights to be discussed as the basis of the conference, when it was lost by a large majority, even Mr. Fletcher, to his immense mortification, as he told us afterwards, being obliged to vote against men for whom he had such profound respect and regard as the noble-hearted Quaker, and many others of that denomination who had rallied round him, such as Arthur Albright, with Arthur O'Neill, Henry Vincent, Parry, and especially Edward Miall, for whom he always felt the highest esteem.

Thereupon the Sturge party withdrew from the conference, and carried on their deliberation in a separate building, leaving William Lovett and Feargus O'Connor with all their respective adherents, and poor Mr. Fletcher, who was neither "fish, fowl, nor good red herring," to carry on their work by themselves. Feargus, of course,

was jubilant in a high degree. He and his friends rubbed their hands with no attempt at concealing their glee at having discomfited the arrogant enemy, "who had presumed to intrude themselves in their broad-cloth and starch among the honest working men of England ;" while Mr. Lovett and his reasonable friends were proportionately dejected at what they saw was the utter failure of this noble scheme for uniting the upper and working classes in an attempt to gain equal rights and liberties for all. Mr. Fletcher told us when he came back that he feared the movement "had suffered irreparable mischief;" and so it proved from that time ; though Feargus kept on his way, exulting, for several years, drawing large profits from the *Northern Star*, and blazing away through that brazen trumpet of his with all his old insolence, beating down rivals and glorifying himself. The movement, as a matter of fact, after this never had any real strength, though it made a deal of noise at times ; even Lovett could do nothing to reinstate it ; and April 10,

1848, practically sealed its final and most inglorious extinction in the celebrated "Kennington Common" humbug of that date. O'Connor's character by that time was seen through by large numbers, though he was still cracked up by a few bigoted and blindfold partisans; and his Land Scheme finished off the tale of his own incessant attempts to cajole his followers and fleece his dupes. Not that I think he had, by any means, a desire or purpose to make money out of their idolatry and folly. It was rather a craving to satisfy his morbid vanity and ambition which drove him forward in his most mischievous career. But O'Connor's idea of getting the people more on to the land, I believe, was very good in itself. It was his way of carrying it out that was so unbusiness-like and discreditable. As diverting attention, and funds also, from the political reform he had been declaring so vehemently essential to the welfare of the country, it was specially ill-timed. I've nothing to say about O'Connor's private character. That was no business of mine.

It is in regard to the mischief he did as a public man that I want my fellow-workmen to learn what they can from his career. And, even as a public character, I've no wish to charge him with deliberate wickedness, in spite of all the evil he did to our class and the country generally. He was only an instance (at least in my judgment) of how much ill (when he can find fools to believe in him) a man may do who gives himself up to vanity and ambition, not troubling himself about the mischief he's doing, if only he can glorify himself and compass his own ends. I once heard Mr. Fletcher preach from the words, "Thou shalt not do evil that good may come," and every word seemed to me a verdict against O'Connor, as well as a good many other pretentious politicians and brilliant statesmen. But I'm only an ignorant fellow, perhaps, in these matters.

It's a pity when one has to say so much evil of any man as I've had to say of that red-pated Irishman; but it's no use blinking facts, and one must call a spade a spade,



if better people are not to be humbugged and half ruined. In this case, the big "spade" altogether ruined, not only many better men than himself, but one of the best movements for working men and the nation at large ever started. And, as there are always great political impostors like him in different ranks coming up in every period, and carrying away a lot of silly folk, who are always ready and waiting to be gulled by showy clap-trap, it seems as well to remind working men of the present day how a number of their fathers were gulled by a mountebank forty years ago, and choose O'Connor to swear by instead of William Lovett. We had a bad time of it at our first meeting after Lovett returned to town from the conference, and it seemed as if we were being driven back into the desert and were never to go into the "promised land" at all.

Another year or two passed. I was saying just now that Davie Roberts was sometimes out of work. He had two children, nice little dears as ever you could wish to



see; but my heart sometimes ached for them, as well as for the father and mother, and many a time on Thursday or Friday nights I know they were often hard up for a crust of bread, even when he was in work; for the usual wages given then were not enough to keep them all comfortably in food and clothing. Now, Davie had never been what you call a drinking-man, and brought home most of his wages on Saturday night; but of course he wanted a talk now and then with his companions, and he also had to go to "the public'" to pay his contributions both to his benefit club and to his trades union lodge. But whenever he was there something must be spent. And especially on Saturday nights, when all the "tubbing" for the little folks was going on, and he had given his missis a handful of silver, it didn't seem much to take a shilling and get out of the way. And yet, as I said, there was not enough to keep them all in decent comfort, even if he hadn't spent a penny on himself. But it does seem hard if a fellow can't have a pint now

and then with a friend. I recollect one night, when I had gone home with him, he began complaining to his wife, rather crossly, of the ragged state of the children, and, of course, she flared up, and asked him how he thought she could clothe and keep them decently on the wages he brought home, "or even," she cried, "keep the poor little dears alive. You know they're always ailing, Davie, and it's high time that we got out of this place; the drains are filthy, and the roof lets in the water."

"Well, but," said I, "the landlord ought to do something for you, Mrs. Roberts."

"The landlord? and my curse go with him!" said the excited woman. "The landlord won't spend a shilling on us, and only says, 'if we don't like the place we may go.'"

But after a time matters got worse; and then one night a woman on the first-floor back told me, when I had come round to learn how they were getting on, "That it was sad to see those poor little children

and their mother crying together, and poor Davie looking as if he were going to be hung." I couldn't eat my own meals in peace, knowing all this, and, of course, I did what I could to help them; but I began to see that the wages in our trade, at all events, ought to be raised, and I was not sorry when word was passed through the shops that a formal application must be made to the masters for an increase of three shillings a week. I was talking this over with Davie as we walked to his home, but when we got up to his rooms poor Maggie met us at the top of the stairs with such a miserable look on her face, that it haunted me for a long time after. It seems one of the children was very ill, and the doctor said it was along of bad smells and want of food and fresh air; and then she cried to her husband,—

"Look here what your master's giving you, and yet he rides in his carriage himself, and has plenty of food, and gardens, and ponies, and dogs for his children, and then off to the sea when they want it; and

how is he treating us, I should like to know?"

Davie growled out,—

"Aye, wife; but there are a great many folks worse off than we are; and all the time there are my Lords This and Mr. That having their great balls and parties, and going a-hunting and shooting all over the country. Many a man keeps his fifty horses and dogs, all better housed and fed than we are!"

This didn't help to soothe the poor mother's mind, and certainly she scolded away in a manner that made me very sorry to find myself there. However, we tried to pacify her by telling her what the men were resolving to do, which gave her a little comfort for a time, and she nursed the poor little sufferer that night with a more hopeful heart. In a few days, however, the child was worse, and Davie had to bring word home to his wife that some of the men had "caved in," and that there was no real "fight" in them, so that the employers had refused the application

point-blank, and told the men that they might go about their business if they liked.

At the time when all this was going on, I felt as mad against masters and well-to-do folk generally as most of my mates. But I've seen more clearly in later times, as I've said here before, that working men ought, at all events, to be grateful to the folk who have saved money and grown rich, for it's that which sets us all to work. If there were no capital, which common sense as well as the learned men tell us is what comes from saving, there would be nobody to pay us our wages, and we should all soon go to the dogs. But I didn't understand much of that in those days and it *is* hard—much as I hate and despise an envious, grudging spirit—it is hard to see others as jolly as they please on your earnings, when you and those dear to you are close to starvation or the work-house door.

Well, the little darling died before the week was out, and almost before Maggie had got over sorrowing for her pretty little

sister's death. It was trouble upon trouble. But what could doctors do against bad drainage, and poor food, and bad air? The light went out in that house, and it was very dark indeed. The child had taken to me more than their first-born, a boy; and she and I did love one another a bit. Many's the time I've spent the evening at Davie's lodgings, walking up and down his little room with that child in my arms when she was teething and fretting, and her father and mother were dead beat with trouble and fatigue. I could hush her off then better than either of 'em, and she would put her dear little wasted arms round my neck, and lay her face against my cheek, and sometimes pat my head and say, "Goo' boy, Jem," just as Davie had taught her. So, when they told me she was dead, I felt as I had never done before. I could love her mother in that child, too, without any sin. Bless her! may God bless her! But I know He has, and I hope to see her some day as an angel in heaven.

I thought at first their child's death would bring Davie and his wife more together again. Many a husband and wife, I fancy, have forgiven one another over the dead body of their child, and have put away all those wretched little misunderstandings, and jealousies, and resentments which married folks seem to me often to take special pains to nurse. When I was once saying to Mr. Fletcher what a pity it was man and wife should fall out so, as some of 'em do, he answered,—

“ Yes, Woodford, but I believe it's just because, while they have human infirmities, they nevertheless love one another so much. They wouldn't feel hurt at a stranger or mere acquaintance saying and doing things which make them very angry coming from one so dear to them ;” and then he quoted some beautiful poetry which I can't exactly remember, but he said it was from Coleridge, and it was about being angry with those we love, and how it works in one's mind. He added, too, that he thought it was the same depth of feeling and interest



in religion that made religious differences so fierce and bitter.<sup>1</sup>

To my great sorrow, however, the death of their little pet, somehow, didn't make Davie and Maggie understand each other better. She, poor thing, was in great trouble about it, and seemed hardly able to keep her reason. I never knew what a mother's love was before. Her trouble was awful to see, and what it must have been to bear, Heaven only knows. Certainly Davie didn't, or he would have shown her more true sympathy. But he didn't seem able to help her or himself to look in the right quarter for comfort and peace. And then, you see, she couldn't help thinking (and I don't wonder) that if she could have got the poor child better food and change

<sup>1</sup> The lines referred to are from Coleridge's "Christabel," Part II. :—

“Alas! they had been friends in youth,  
But whispering tongues can poison truth;  
And Constancy lives in realms above;  
And life is thorny, and youth is vain;  
And to be wroth with one we love  
Doth work like madness in the brain.”

of air when it first took ill, or if they could have lived in more wholesome lodgings from the first, it's life would have been saved. And she told Davie outright, that if he hadn't spent so much of his wages on himself, they wouldn't have lost baby. Of course he fired up at that, and said,—

“Nonsense, wife. Why, I haven't spent one shilling a week on beer and 'baccy all the time I've been out of work, and not five shillings a week, I'm certain, when I had plenty to do. Hang it, a fellow can't spend less than that if he's to have any company at all. Why, you wouldn't keep him moping at home, would you, every night all the week round? Nor be shabby to the landlord, nor sneak away when others have treated him, and his turn to stand treat comes round? I tell you what, Maggie, it's deuced hard to put all the blame on me—”

But she only shook her head, and said, between her sobs,—

“Those shillings would have saved my darling's life!” which, wherever the blame

lay, I think was too true; but I could say nothing to help matters. I thought Davie was sometimes selfish in going to "the public," and in filling his pipe; but I knew how hard it was for a man to give up all company, and the 'baccy at least deadens the appetite; and I thought, too, his wife might sometimes have made him happier when he was at home. But I did say to him once, I remember,—

"Davie, I can't help thinking you were all the better, years ago, for being teetotal."

"Well," said he, "if it's such a good thing, why don't *you* join?"

"I don't mind," said I, "if you will."

But he shook his head. He was a very sociable man, was Davie, and many a time it cost him nothing to get his skin full, because he could sing a song and tell a story better than most men I've met. But then he was one of the readiest men I ever knew to treat others. As long as he had a sixpence in his pocket he'd never mind standing a pot for companions. I mind

hearing Mr. Fletcher once say that many a good man, as times go, many a very useful, public-spirited, aye, and generous fellow, was rather selfish at heart. I couldn't understand it at the time; but something about Davie's way of going on after he was married made it clearer to me. But he did join teetotal, poor fellow, a few weeks after the meeting on the 10th April, 1848, and told his wife he'd do so the night before. However, that's neither here nor there, just now. The loss of her child seemed to make Maggie more hard and cold towards her husband, and to look at him as the cause of all her trouble. There was nothing I could say or do to help make things smooth, but I could say, without offending either of them, and did say, that I thought employers, and house-landlords, and the governing classes too, as well as parish vestries, had all much to answer for, as to the death of our little darling, and of many another just as well loved as she was. But I ought to add that whatever Maggie's manner to Davie might be (and it altered

strangely at times), he was really kind to her, in general, in his way, during those dark days. But I think—tho' I don't quite like saying it—if, throughout their married life, he had sometimes been more of a man, she would always have been more of a woman.

## CHAPTER VIII.

It was in this year, 1848, with all its storms and troubles, that a number of us had one great happiness. We saw our beloved leader receive a bit of the honour and gratitude he had so well deserved. I think it was one of the happiest days in my life when I stood among a large number of William Lovett's friends in the National Hall to present him with a public testimonial of respect for his public services. It was, indeed, a grand sight, not to be forgotten, though the great world and the "upper ten" knew and cared nothing about it. An admirable address (which I shall put in, if I can get room—if not, it will be found, full length, in Lovett's "Memoir," p. 333) was drawn up by

W. Johnson Fox, Esq., M.P., and signed on behalf of the subscribers by the barrister I spoke of before, Mr. J. Humffreys Parry (who was chairman of the committee and the meeting), and Mr. J. T. Mallett, who had acted as secretary. We first had a tea-meeting, and then came the presentation. There was a handsome silver tea-service, and a purse of 140*l.*, all spread out on a table on the platform before the chairman. After they were handed to him by Mr. Parry, with some earnest words, which we all echoed, Lovett replied so gratefully and modestly, and spoke in such a way about what he wanted to do and see done for his fellow-countrymen, that Bembridge and others, who had been his best fellow-workers for many a day, seemed more overcome than they liked to show; and when, as I looked at him standing up there, and thought of the first time I had heard him speaking out for us at the "Crown and Anchor," ten years before, and of all the opposition he had met with, and all the quiet perseverance with which he had worked on



through good and ill report, I felt a great lump in my own throat, and I couldn't cry "Hear, hear," at the right places. But it was a very happy evening, and I don't expect ever to know another like it. I am sure Mr. and Mrs. Lovett were well pleased.

Time wore on. Years passed. The potatoe-rot came, and Sir Robert Peel showed himself a great man. The repeal of the Corn Laws took place at last. Sir Robert received the usual reward of true patriots, and Disraeli took the opportunity to crucify him. But very soon things began to mend. The workmen in the building trades had been organizing their forces, and such men as Kelso, Roberts, and others, had been using their arguments and eloquence to some effect. A general application was at length agreed upon, and when the employers again refused, the strike actually did take place, and the men took out their tools, much to the surprise of the masters. They expected to have had an easy victory again, and were disappointed. I suppose the state of trade

would then really bear advance, for before long it was agreed to, though not quite to the extent the men had demanded. I was always myself in favour of arbitration, and if one party offered it and the other party refused I used to think they must be in the wrong; but I have since seen there are cases in which both masters and men might be justified in declining it, but I cannot go any further into that question here. In the present case the men got most of what they wanted, and what I think they were fairly entitled to; so those of them who, like Kelso and Roberts, were comparatively steady men, felt the benefit in their homes, as did their poor little children; a good many, no doubt, merely drank the harder, and their wives and kids were no better off, sometimes rather worse. Just as it was in later days, when by combination the men in various trades got shorter hours of work, it was a great blessing to those who could use their leisure well; but as for the rest it only gave them longer time for drinking, and many a wife

complained bitterly of the Saturday half-holiday, and short-time movement, "for," said they, "it only gives the fools more time to drink." Things are a little better now than they were then.

During these last few years Chartism sometimes seemed only half alive, but it made a few more grand spurts after the French Revolution, in February, 1848. All the best life of it, however, had been crushed out of the movement by the way in which Lovett, and all Lovett's friends, were denounced by the O'Connor party and its organ, the *Northern Star*. O'Connor himself had been turning the attention of the people very much away from agitation for the Charter, as I said before, to his Land scheme; while Lovett, finding himself slandered and suspected by great numbers of the Chartists, had been directing his energies to enabling the working classes to rise in the moral, mental, and social scale, and thus to gain their political rights by showing that they both deserved them and were prepared to make good use of them when

obtained. Why O'Connor and his friends should have attempted to galvanize the movement by the stupid piece of folly enacted on Kennington Common, I hardly know, unless it can be explained as far as he was concerned, like many of his other actions, by his inordinate vanity and greed of power and notoriety. But, of course, there were others responsible for it as well as O'Connor, and I don't know that one was more to blame than another.

After Davie was married, and Kitty Barber saw that her hopes in that quarter were certainly quashed—at least for the present—I heard she gave herself up to idle, loose ways, and at length left her home and the village in search of the handsome young scoundrel, Mr. Haughton, who had first attracted her attention when he came to persecute Maggie Thatcher, and who had paid her at different times for being his model. She didn't care about him before that for a very good reason, as has been told; but after Maggie's marriage she was seen throwing herself about one evening

in a regular rage, and declaring that there was a much finer young fellow would be glad to have her company "than any of those poor Broadfield louts;" and when, soon after, she left the village, it was shrewdly guessed that she had gone in search of the aristocratic young artist, and nobody heard anything more of her for a long time. I could not, however, help thinking of the poor, motherless creature sometimes, and with a good deal of pity, for I knew myself what it was to love in the wrong place; but then I was not going to throw myself into profligate ways because I couldn't get just the particular girl I wanted; and Kitty might have kept herself respectable, and there was more than one decent lad in Broadfield would have married her if she would have had him.

Well, about the time that I am speaking of—i. e., three or four months before the Kennington Common row—who should turn up in our neighbourhood but poor Kitty herself, with tawdry finery and a jaunty sort of air about her, that made

one's heart ache. Now, at this time, though wages were better and there was enough to eat, I could not help seeing that things were not going on as well between Maggie and Davie as I could have wished, and I was, therefore, particularly sorry to see that wretched girl coming among us once more. Davie was often a good deal vexed with his wife, and yet could not explain what was the matter; while she didn't understand his complainings; in fact, he kept them to himself, I know, a good deal, perhaps as much as he could; and when he did speak about what vexed him, she replied that he was always finding fault. Sometimes I thought that he had just worried her beyond all patience by his fidgety and irritable ways, so that she had become really unjust to him; while all their troubles had, of course, not helped to sweeten and smooth a temper that had never been one of the best. Once, when there had been sharp words passing between them, he said, "Ah, Maggie, there's many a girl I could have made a deal happier than I have you."

“Well,” she answered, “may be it’s a pity you didn’t try, Davie.” She was just on the point of adding, “There’s many a man might have made me a deal happier than you;” but somehow she didn’t. She knew there were few men who would have borne with her, and let her have her own way as he had done; and then all Davie’s noble thoughts, and what are called aspirations, had been very precious to her, and, in fact, had been her life for many a day; and once, I remember, when the wife of one of his mates was complaining to Maggie of her husband, and saying, “There now, you see, the men don’t try to make us companions, or tell us anything that interests them, and then they complain that they get no company at home, and must always be looking for it at the public-house,” Maggie brightened up, and said, with a beautiful bit of pride and pleasure, “Ah! it’s not so with my man; for he *does* talk to me about what interests him, and it’s a fine thing to hear what he and Jem Woodford,



and Lovett and Bembridge, and others, are trying to do."

But then one evening when Davie was talking to me about his home, and saying how desperately unhappy he often was there, he went on to say,—

"Well, you see, my Maggie's a fine creature, and very fond I am of her; but still she's a bit too tart and sharp for me after all, and will always have it that she's in the right, and that she never does wrong, oh, no! never at all. Ah, if she would but allow just for once in a way that she was in the wrong by way of variety, I can't tell you, old fellow, what a fool I should be about her, for I *do* love her as it is, and then I should love her too much, it may be!"

"Ah, Davie," said I, trying to smile, "perhaps it's seeing how often you confess your faults, and then go and do the same again, that has set her agen saying she's in the wrong." Still I knew she was a bit too proud, may be.

But they *were* fond of one another, and no mistake, for all their falling out now and

then. And how very happy she used to make him when it was all right, and he did as he ought. But I think they began to see what Mr. Fletcher once told them outright, that loving one another, even as truly as they did, by itself, won't carry married folks safely through all their troubles and tempers. There must be the love of God, he said, in their hearts, and better help coming than they can give each other.

I believe, however, things would have all worked round well with them at last if it hadn't been for that unhappy girl, Kitty Barber, finding us out, and coming down into our neighbourhood like an ill-bird of prey. There is no doubt Davie had been once very much and foolishly smitten with her, and when he saw her again I fancy a bit of his old folly returned. But it was something worse than folly now he was married.

Now, when Maggie saw the girl in that miserable state in which she first turned up in our neighbourhood, I know her heart yearned towards her; and she forgave and

forgot all the wrong she herself had suffered from her. She gave her bits of clothes, and took her nice food, and pinches of tea, and tried to get her work. But after a bit she saw a deal further into Kitty's past life and her present notions than she liked; and before very long she began to give up all hope of the girl's leading a steady life. Then she noticed, too, something that made her more unhappy still.

Some folks would say that when Davie first saw Kitty Barber had come into his neighbourhood again, and knew that he would like to go and chat with her sometimes, just as he used to do when he was vexed with Maggie, he ought, as an honest man, to have said to himself he'd never go near her, and not pass a word with her, or even know her if they met. But, in the first place, I think he was so good and innocent himself, he couldn't believe Kitty was as bad as she really was by this time, just as he couldn't believe Feargus O'Connor was either altogether fool or knave; and, in the next place, he couldn't help

feeling a deal of pity for her ; and remembering the old school-days at Broadfield, when she was the pretty little innocent "Puss-in-Boots," whom most of the boys were in love with. Of course the poor jade saw quickly enough what he thought about her, and made the most of it.

I am sure Davie was true to his wife in heart as well as in act, even though they too often fell out about trifles ; but one never can tell what will happen if a fellow goes on, as the poets say, like a moth playing round a candle, which was what Davie did. Of course it could not but make Maggie sorry to see her husband chatting and laughing with the girl after she had read the changes that had gone on, and read them much more truly than her husband. She would have done anything on earth, in reason, herself, to try and bring back the lost sheep to better ways, but she knew too well it smacked of no good to any one that Davie and Kitty should be going on as if nothing had happened. So, as I said, it made her very jealous and un-

happy to see them together, and with good reason. Then, before long, she told Davie her mind, perhaps in rather too domineering a way, and he didn't like that, naturally; and though he didn't say much, he was vexed, and didn't alter his conduct a bit. So Kitty cherished wicked hopes, and grew bolder. Then I spoke a word or two. But it was no good. Things were getting worse and worse in more ways than one, when one night Davie came to my room full of trouble, and quite excited.

“By the Lord,” he said, “you’re right about that girl. She’s a bad ’un, and no mistake.”

I said nothing, for it wouldn't do to tell a friend at a time like that, that he might and ought to have seen the truth of what his wife told him long ago. Presently he broke out again :—

“And oh, Jem ! Jem ! she says she owes her fall to me. Tell me that’s a lie, for heaven’s sake !”

“Davie,” said I, rather sternly I suppose, for I began to feel it was no time for saying

soft things, "I believe it was a much finer sort of chap than you who has most to answer for in that girl's ruin. But I believe that you have a deal to answer for, too, and you ought to know it."

He started, and looked in my face, half wildly, half fiercely, as if he'd been stung.

"What do you mean by that, then?" said he, at length.

"Can't you remember, Davie, how I warned you in old days that all that flirting and fooling and romping were as bad for her as for you?"

The man hid his face in his hands, and his whole frame shook.

"Break with her, Davie, altogether. Promise me—or, what's better, promise God—you'll never speak to that girl again for twelve months. There's no middle course, and you may be sure it's not you that can now do her any good. Help Maggie to get her into a Penitentiary or Refuge, and I'll give you every penny I can spare towards it; but leave her to the women. Will you promise?"

“ God helping me, I will, Woodford. . . . and may He bless you for speaking out plain. Isn’t it strange how one’s early follies or sins find one out years after ? ”

Maggie’s prayers that night, I believe, had a deal of thankfulness in them ; and next day she set to work to see about the Refuge. Kitty was more willing to go to it now, and we hoped she’d take a right turn. She seemed to do so for a time, and then the ladies got her a situation in service. I felt pretty sure that, in a year’s time, she would either be reformed or have gone altogether to the bad ; and, in either case, would be out of Davie’s way.



## CHAPTER IX.

My friends went along happily now, for trade had mended, and Davie had plenty to do at fair wages, and there was not so much danger of the money running out as fast as it came in. What Maggie had said about his going to "the public," after their little darling's death, didn't seem to do much good at the time; and at first, even out of mere bravado, and just to show he wasn't tied to her apron-strings, I suppose, he went nearly as often to the "Jolly Sawyers" as before, yet that didn't last long. I told him he was a big fool, for I lost all patience with him, and he took it from me, tho' he wouldn't from his wife; and I think he only wanted an excuse for giving up altogether. The landlord and

his wife at the "pub" were sorry, I dare say, to miss us both, for I said I'd give it up if he would. But it was a rare good job for Maggie and their boy. Of course I helped as well as I could to make the evenings go off pleasantly, and so did two or three of our shopmates, who'd come and spend an hour or two with us, when we'd talk, and laugh, and sing, and were uncommonly cheerful together. But the room was very small and we kept the boy awake sometimes, till he'd begin to cry. So, now and then, we went out to a music-hall (which, however, rather disgusted Davie, and me, too, for that matter), or to the theatre, or to a temperance lecture and entertainment, or cheap concert. The Mechanics' Institution in Southampton-buildings helped us on famously, and Davie and I would take it in turns to take care of the little lad, to let Maggie go now and then to a lecture or concert there. It had been a great help to me in former days by its classes, and now there was a good deal of sensible recreation in it.

So it came about that Maggie softened towards her husband, and all the best part of her nature bloomed out, and a bit of the old fun and sparkling sauciness of early days showed itself, when she got away from thinking of the little one who would never laugh with her again. It was quite pretty and touching to see Maggie trying to make Davie talk and laugh as he used to do, or, perhaps, putting a shilling in his hand and telling him to go and see a play, and come back and tell her all about it. But he and I spent some hours every week over our Euclid and "The Builder's Practical Directory," or "Nicholson's Carpentry."

Davie had taken Maggie first of all alone, soon after they were married, and then, with their two children, more than once to the tea-gardens where they had spent such a delightful day when courting. But after her little girl's death Davie noticed she never liked going there again. So he took her now and again during those happy years I'm speaking of, for a run down to Margate or Brighton, and they

used to come back looking so bright and jolly, it was a sight to see them. Then there was another dear little girl came to bless their home, and take the place of the one gone away.

So we were all getting along very comfortably, so to say, for some time. Davie got money fast now, for he was always very quick, and had learnt all I could teach him, and more, too. He had mastered thoroughly what was long a sore puzzle to me, study as I would. I mean hand-railing. But the men who can do this and other difficult branches of their trade, are rather shy, as one might expect, of letting their mates see what they are about when doing it; and so I never got any help from any of them except Kelso, nor a chance of learning that trick in the shop. I had to pay a brother chip half-a-crown a lesson to teach it to me.

Another thing I was uncommon glad of was, that about this time Mr. Fletcher came to London with his amiable wife,

and settled with that congregation in Kentish Town, which, as I said before, he came up to visit. So we used all to attend his chapel regularly, and a deal of good I think he did us, and many more. Maggie was never what you may call enthusiastic about religion or clergymen, but she often seemed to like going to a place of worship, and she told me once some of her happiest hours were at Mr. Fletcher's chapel of a Sunday evening. We hadn't been able to feel altogether at home, like, in any church or chapel before he came; and yet I had become more and more sure one can't get along rightly, either for this world or the next, without the parsons. We seem to want the help of some one who isn't always being worked and worried with the cares of a business or trade. But then, as Bembridge made Mr. Fletcher see years ago, working men can only believe heartily in those parsons who try to make *this* world better for them to live in, and not merely prepare them, as they call it, for another. I remember hearing a friend of mine telling

some of us one evening what showed pretty correctly working men's notion of the kind of men the clergy should be. He said he had proposed, as a subject of discussion to a number of hard-headed Lancashire men, the question whether lawyers, doctors, or parsons were of most use to society. "And how do you think," said my friend, "the men settled it?" One of us answered, he supposed they said the lawyers, but most of us guessed it was the doctors won the day.

"No, they agreed at last that the parsons were the most useful, because if they did their duty the others wouldn't be wanted." We all laughed and agreed with the Lancashire lads.

Mr. Fletcher, when he got back into the kind of company and social intercourse he had always been used to as a young man, never forgot his resolution to help working men to get the same rational and refining enjoyments which the middle-class folk have so largely, but of which the working class used hardly to get a taste. The

purposes he formed in his dark days at East Leigh for the social enjoyment and political elevation of that class I could see were seldom absent from his thoughts, and he worked hard in various ways to carry them out, which certainly made those workmen, who saw what he was doing, take to his preaching in a way that is not as common as it might be.

He took warmly to Davie, and Davie to him. Poor Roberts had a deal on his mind, and not a little on his conscience, and he sadly wanted a man like Mr. Fletcher to guide and comfort him. Maggie, too, found Mr. Fletcher a great help, and grew to be very fond of him. Her temper mended with more sunshine, and we, or at least they, might have gone on very happily I think for many years if only Davie hadn't been naturally of such a restless, roving disposition. If *I* wasn't altogether at rest in mind and heart, and had to work desperately hard sometimes to blow off the extra steam, it was hardly to be wondered at; and sometimes I used to



think very seriously of leaving London for good and settling down in Birmingham or Sheffield, and looking out for a wife, as in both places I had warm friends—(I was glad enough afterwards I didn't go). But Davie had no excuse for being fidgety. He honoured and admired Lovett, and Bembridge, and Moore, and others, and worked with them at the National Hall both weekdays and Sundays as heartily as I did. He had the bonniest, bravest, loveliest wife, and a beautiful little boy and baby to brighten his home when he was in it. But he never did know when he was well off, nor could he be content with anything, nor stick to anything for long at a time. Like many a man I've noticed, after having once tasted the sweets of popular applause and all the excitement of public meetings, he never lost a hankering for it again. It was partly this, I believe, and partly a longing to have the freedom of a country life and to be his own master that made him listen to Feargus O'Connor's rubbishy Land Scheme,

and take shares in it, though his wife declared she never could go and "live in a dismal, sticky allotment ground, miles away from all the world." But that restless devil in poor Davie's mind kept goading him on; and so it happened that at the beginning of 1848 he was once more hand and glove with some of O'Connor's tools and dupes, and was a marked man among them. I've reason to say "a marked man," for the Government were watching these men even before the French Revolution of February, '48, but ten times more closely after it. Not that I mean all the men still working, then, with O'Connor were his tools. Several honest, able men, among others Samuel Kydd, delegate from Oldham to the second convention, John Lowry, and Bronterre O'Brien, ought to be honourably mentioned. Ernest Jones, also, a young gentleman of good family, a barrister by profession, had thrown himself into the movement, sacrificing all his prospects and position in life, with a genuine zeal and in a martyr spirit, deserving of

grateful remembrance by working men, however mistaken his conduct may be thought. There was a very able, honest young fellow, too, whose acquaintance I was glad to make about this time—a thorough-going Chartist, but with a mind capable of valuing a great many good things beside the Charter, and who was working quietly then, as he has been doing all his life since, more or less, for the real elevation of his class. He wasn't much known then, but has been widely known and honoured since—I mean George Odger; a working shoemaker, and a good and true man, according to my judgment and that of many others. His death, a year ago, at a comparatively early age, and before he could help his class by getting into the House of Commons, was a real misfortune, as I have heard several M.P.'s honestly say.

But there, if I'm to speak of all the fine fellows I've known in this Chartist movement I shall never have done; so, to return.

This second Convention, which consisted of forty-seven delegates from London, and large towns in England, and from Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Paisley, and Dundee, in Scotland, assembled in London on April 4, 1848, at the John-street Institution, near Tottenham Court-road, and brought heart-rending, and in some cases alarming, accounts of the state of their districts. They were thoroughly in earnest, for the most part, but the plans of the more sensible men among them were constantly thrown out of gear by O'Connor's bombast and extravagance, which stimulated the younger and more reckless spirits to foolish or dangerous words and acts.

The Convention pushed forward its preparations for the great meeting to be held on Kennington Common on the 10th, from which a procession was to go across Westminster-bridge to the House of Commons to present the National Petition. O'Connor declared he would be in the front rank of it, "and then let the military shoot if they dare." Much alarm was evidently caused

among the bigwigs at the prospect of this procession, and there was a rare stir in our shop and in a great many others, when one man after another came in breathless with the news that the Government had forbidden the procession as illegal. The meeting itself was not to be interfered with if peaceably conducted. Many of the leaders of the movement believed—and O'Connor encouraged the belief at one time, while assailing it at another—that the Ministers would give way as to the procession. However, the preparations for resisting it by force went rapidly on. Special constables were sworn in to the number of fifty or sixty thousand. Troops were collected, and it was quite evident to all, but those who were besotted with their own headstrong fancies, that a fearful loss of life would ensue if the procession attempted to force its way. O'Connor had to play a double game.

“Bravo, bravo, old Feergus!” shouted Davie Roberts, bursting into the tap-room of our “house of call,” where a number of

us were gathered on the Saturday evening to hear and discuss the exciting questions of the day. For though I stood aloof, with my chief, from all that business—Convention, Kennington meeting, procession, and all—I was desperately anxious to see how things would go, knowing too well that the cause we loved so dearly was in more deadly danger from its friends, both sham and genuine, than even from its worst enemies.

“Bravo!” shouted Davie, as he flourished the *Star*. “Here’s that blessed old boy telling us he can no longer dare to bid us *wait!*” He almost shrieked out this last word. “No, no, no more waiting. He says, ‘I tell you in my soul I believe the propitious hour has arrived when our long suffering and martyrdom may be crowned with victory.’ That is our noble O’Connor’s appeal to all true Chartists.” And here he unbuttoned his coat, and threw a heavy horse-pistol on the table with a clang that made the room ring again, “And these,” here he flung a rusty



pike-head beside the pistol, "are my answers to his appeal. Brothers, are you ready!" and he looked round as if he were a general at the head of an army. "The hour has come!" A dead silence followed.

The men were taken by surprise, but not a single cheer was raised. It was what they call the thin edge between the sublime and the ridiculous. But in another moment there might have been a storm of applause, and then half of 'em in gaol next day. I was thinking of Jem Burt out in the penal settlements, and of the poor girl who should have been his wife; and then I thought of Maggie, and my head seemed all in a flame. . . . But I got up a smile, and said quietly, "General Roberts—you're a d——d ninny!"

Then there was a burst of laughter. In an instant he rushed at me like a tiger; but two or three caught and held him, and danger from the Bobbies was over. The men laughed all the more at his rage, because I don't think they had ever heard me swear before in their company. Sometimes they



used to call me "Quaker Jem." Oaths, after all, are a coarse kind of lingo, and I don't hear gentlemen use them now-a-days.

"Don't be fierce, old fellow?" I cried; "but just read that other letter in the *Star* from your valiant chief, and then knock me down, if you please."

Davie snatched the paper from my hands, as I pointed to the memorable letter, which, with such extraordinary effrontery, appeared in the very same issue as the one from which Davie had just been quoting.

"Read! Read it out!" cried several voices. But Davie, when he had hastily glanced at it, stood dumb-founded. So then I read about O'Connor's abuse of "the mouthing patriots" who talked of going armed to the meeting; read how he sneered at the folly of "raw recruits;" and then how he bid the people beware of countenancing them. I never saw a poor fellow so chap-fallen as our enthusiastic friend, and when he got up, pocketed his artillery, and flung himself

with a savage oath out of the room, I felt very sorry for him, but hoped he and others were saved from transportation.

This, indeed, was a very real danger; for the night before in the House of Commons, the Home Secretary, Sir George Grey, had moved for leave to bring in a Bill for the better security of the Crown and Government, which converted "open and advised speaking of seditious language" from a misdemeanour into felony, punishable with transportation. That was hot work. But the French Revolution of February, and the ease with which it was done, threw both "the ruling classes," as they were often called, and the poor suffering workies, off their balance. The Bill passed the House of Commons the following Wednesday (April 12), by a majority of 295 to 40, and the House of Lords, unanimously, the following day.

In spite of the Government proclamation that the procession would be illegal, the chief members of the Convention de-

clared their intention to join in it, with the exception of Bronterre O'Brien, who thought the course the Convention was adopting most mischievous. I was at the meeting in the Chartist Hall, Lambeth, on the Sunday, when he gave in his resignation as a member of the Convention. He was badly received, his explanations interrupted by groans and hisses, and at last he had to sit down. As I watched his fine features working with bitter emotion, I couldn't help thinking how little able the people generally seem to distinguish their best and wisest friends from sham and shoddy. O'Brien was a man who, under happier political arrangements, and, I suppose, with better training, might have played a noble part in the great political drama of the day. He longed as much as any of the Convention to see justice done to our class, but he thought, and I believe rightly, that the distress among those who sent the members of it up to London was goading them on to ruinous courses, while three or four

who cared little for the people compared with their own power and vanity, were swaggering and strutting away at the poor fools' expense.

Coming away from that Lambeth meeting, who should I meet but Rufford, who showed up very friendly. A leading member of the Convention joined us, and said that O'Brien had "got *his* gruel, which he well deserved." Rufford said "Bosh!" and the discussion got warm, especially when Rufford spoke his mind about O'Connor.

"Do you really suppose," said he, "that either Feargus or Hill" (the editor of the *Star*), "or half-a-dozen more of their friends, really want the Charter carried, and the agitation ended?"

The other man stopping, faced us, and said, with a good deal of warmth, "Now, hang it, man, why what interest can Feargus have in keeping up the game, I should like to know?"

"What interest! What do you suppose they are making every week by the

*Northern Star*? And what do you guess its circulation would be if the Charter were carried?"

The man seemed planted for a second, then said, "Why, they declare they are losing by every issue of that paper!"

"And do you believe them? You know the circulation is about 40,000 a week. You're talking nonsense."

The man seemed to have got something to think about, and went off presently, only saying, "Well, you're a darned grumbler; and if O'Connor does make money out of us, he gives it back freely."

"Yes," said I, as the other man went off with his friends, "he is generous, often, in giving, I do believe."

"He only gives a little," growled Rufford, "that he may get back twice as much—bait for the hook—nothing more."

"May be. But see how, over and over again, he has paid lots of tin for the defence of our Chartist prisoners."

"Seems a lot to you, perhaps. What

are a few hundreds to the thousands he must have been netting, not merely by the sale of the *Star*, but by advertisements? Ah, my boy, advertisements are the food that makes the mare to go. And what a heap of gold-dust serial papers must make by 'em." I respectfully assented.

"That's the worst of all newspapers," continued Rufford, as we walked on. "They are great trading firms or companies, and can't afford to do much more than look to their dividends. People pin their faith on a favourite newspaper, and fancy that editors are only actuated by a patriotic desire for the public welfare. I suppose some of them are in earnest, and do their best to hold out true lights. But when a paper has got a large circulation, depend upon it, dividends carry the day."

"And the more rowing and desperate moves, and striking and dangerous incidents, and quarrels, and horrid crimes, and general devilry of all sorts, the better for the dividends." "That's about the size of it, Jem! But when will you come



and see me and my old woman?" "After the procession. Good-night." It *was* a comfort to meet one man who had eyes in his head, and wasn't trying to stand topsy-turvy.

Monday, April 10, 1848, came at last. . . . O'Connor and the Convention had made all their preparations, and the Duke had also made his—the one for irretrievable disgrace and failure, the other for calm, peaceful, and triumphant success. Mr. Fletcher told me that when he was hurrying in the early morning to his place of gathering, appointed for the special constables of his district, he met an old friend, an officer of the Blues, then quartered at Hounslow, leading his troops into a timber-yard near Westminster-bridge. He noticed the friend hadn't got his usual troop-horse, and his heart misgave him, for he knew by that token bloody work was expected, and the favourite old charger was kept safe in quarters. Neither officers nor privates much liked the prospect before them on the morning of the 10th.



“Better fight a thousand foreign foes,”  
was the thought in many a brave heart, I  
believe, “than a score of one’s own coun-  
trymen.” . . . . .

## CHAPTER X.

THE sun dawned that day on a strange spectacle—one of which all men should have felt bitterly ashamed, it seems to me, and yet one of which they might also feel amazingly proud. It was a bitter shame that nearly twenty years after all classes, except a few peers and Tories, had stood shoulder to shoulder to wring the nation's liberties from corrupt and certainly despotic hands, the middle and upper classes should have allowed so great a breach to take place between them and the toiling millions, that it could be possible for the country to have been more than once during that period on the brink of a bloody revolution. But if there was that danger, it was something to be proud of that fifty

or sixty thousand London citizens should have stood quietly that day in the streets, armed only with wooden truncheons, ready to fight, bleed, and perhaps die, to uphold the majesty of law and civil order, and to say by that conduct, political reform was to be won in this country only by peaceful means, not bloodshed.

The 10th of April scene, as I read it, was practically the final protest of Chartists against political and social wrongs, delivered in the stupidest, clumsiest manner that can be conceived; and the protest of middle-class comfortable citizens against being disturbed in their comfort, or hurried into reforms faster than their judgment desired, by the threat of physical force.

So the pavements of the great London thoroughfares swarmed that livelong day with noblemen, gentlemen, clerks (in great force), tradesmen, lawyers, doctors, architects, and artists, with Louis Napoleon among the rest, and a few working men, all sworn in as special constables to preserve the Queen's peace. The new police

were here, there, and everywhere. Troops had been ordered up from Chatham and Windsor, as well as from Hounslow, and even from Chichester, Winchester, and Dover. Horse and foot, with batteries of artillery from Woolwich, were quietly drawn out before noon from the yards and hiding-places where they had been concealed until the Chartist multitude had crossed the bridges, and they then occupied every pass by which that multitude could return in organized array. All the public buildings were garrisoned. The mounted police had broadswords and pistols. The ostensible object of the gathering on Kennington Common was to pass resolutions in favour of the Charter, and denouncing the Government, and then to return in force to present their huge petition to Parliament. Whether this was all that the Chartist leaders, or O'Connor himself, intended to do, will never be known. My own belief is that Feargus's vanity and ambition had been stung into restless activity by the recent French

Revolution, and that, fired with a great longing to play some conspicuous part, he simply collected the largest assembly in his power. What was to come after he left to the chapter of accidents, quite ready to ride into a dictatorship atop of a great wave of bloodshed, if that should be the fortune of the day, but certainly not having any deep-laid plans for such wickedness. Else why lead an unarmed multitude over the bridges, and thereby give the Government power to wring the neck of an insurrection as easily as a housewife kills a fowl?

All that was left for him, at any rate, to do when he came back from an interview with Mr. Mayne, Chief Commissioner of Police, to which he was summoned at the Horns Tavern, and had mounted his waggon on the common, and looked over the vast sea of upturned faces, was to inform his bewildered followers that the Government had refused to allow the petition to be presented by the multitude, or to permit them to re-cross the bridges,

except in twos and threes, or to cross Westminster and Waterloo Bridges at all.

He had been welcomed, Davie told us, with ringing cheers by the enthusiastic thousands as he rose, but many were ready to hoot at him with yells of disappointed rage when they found that, after all his vapouring and preparations, O'Connor had pledged himself to Mr. Mayne that the procession should be abandoned. But his remarkable eloquence and power of deluding his followers were never more plainly shown. Even Davie was again carried away by it. He wrapped up the painful and humiliating facts so neatly that you might have thought, as the majority did, that he had gained a great victory. He began by saying, "My children, you were industriously told that I would not be amongst you to-day. Well, I am here. (Loud applause.) I have received more than a hundred letters entreating me not to attend this meeting, for that, if I did, my life would be sacrificed. But I would rather be stabbed to the heart than resign

my proper place among my children.” (Tremendous cheering.) He implored them not to ruin their great cause by any imprudence, told them of the blessings he was preparing for them by his land scheme, asked all who would act with prudence, and carry the charter, to hold up hands, when, of course, a huge forest of horny hands went up, and he concluded, amidst deafening cheers, with declaring that, though he might be stretched on the rack, he would smile terror out of countenance, go on conquering, and to conquer, &c. And Davie cheered with the loudest!

For in spite of all that Maggie, Mr. Fletcher, and I could say—in spite even of his immense disgust on Saturday night at O’Connor’s second letter in the *Star*—Davie Roberts vowed he would march with his brother Chartists to Kennington Common and Westminster Hall that day. And march with them to the Common he did, though he had consented rather sulkily, and only when he saw Maggie in tears, to



leave his pocket artillery at home. Lucky for him that he did.

But though he was actually fool enough, by his own confession, to join in cheering that wonderfully silly rot of O'Connor's, yet, when the excitement was over, and he, with others, was feeling all the bitterness and humiliation of his position, as they tramped wearily and dismally home again, the whole matter began to appear in a different light, and they asked each other what O'Connor's conduct and speech really meant. . . . Men cursed him that day for a fool, and a coward into the bargain, who had been ready to die for him the day before.

The sittings of the Convention, however, continued for a time with considerable spirit, as did the agitation generally, in spite of the "fiasco" (which, I believe, means "muddle") of April 10. For the terrible distress under which the working classes were suffering, combined with the revolutions going forward on the Continent, was quite enough to keep the fires

going. Men in the manufacturing districts felt, and constantly said, that it would be better to die by shot and steel, fighting for the Charter, which they thought alone could remedy the evil, than by the lingering death of starvation and disease. Large open-air meetings were held in many places; one in Manchester, on Sunday, April 17, was attended by 100,000 persons; another at Halifax by 80,000—surrounded by the military. At Aberdeen, amidst the cheers of 10,000 people, a resolution was passed for forming a National Guard, which was also resolved on at a Chartist delegate meeting for Lancashire and Yorkshire. Ireland was on the edge of rebellion. Physical-force demonstrations took place in Yorkshire, at Bradford, Willesden, and Bingley. A desperate fight took place at Bradford between the people, the special constables, and the police. At last the military had to be called out, and not till after that did the fight end. Collisions took place also at Oldham, Manchester, Blackstone Edge, Ashton (where a police-

man, named Bright, was shot dead, and the military were called out), and other places.

Dreary work! But in the midst of all this misery and hullabaloo the Rochdale pioneers were quietly talking about "Co-operation," in a little room, I'm told, eight feet square; and a few other long heads were discussing the nationalization of the land reform, the currency laws, establishment of national loan systems through State banks, exchange marts, reform of the Poor Laws, &c. Dissensions, meanwhile, of course broke out among the leading Chartists, while O'Connor's influence had begun to wane from April 10. Most of the physical-force men were still thoroughly in earnest, and they saw that he was not. Resolutions of confidence in him were got up in all quarters, and were trumpeted, exaggerated, or fabricated in the columns of the *Star*. But, as Lovett said to me one night, they couldn't stop the ebb tide. O'Connor was right, of course, in abandoning the procession and in not telling the people to come armed,

but then he should never have blustered about forcing it through. To crown their discomfiture the enormous National Petition was found to contain so large a number of fictitious and coarse ridiculous signatures that no end of ridicule was poured on the whole movement.

Amidst all the confusion and uproar the Convention, in spite of the opposition of O'Connor and his supporters, had resolved on holding a "National Assembly," into which it should merge, and which met accordingly in London, on May 1, with twenty-eight delegates, a much smaller number, let it be observed, than formed the Convention,—exactly the same number, curiously enough, as that of the first Rochdale Co-operators. But the resemblance doesn't go much further. What a huge difference, I've often thought, there was in the value of the work those two sets of twenty-eight were doing about that time. Look at the consequences, after a bit.

Yet I'm not one who says no good was

done by all that physical-force foolery. Anyhow the Chartist agitation, physical force and all, made the Parliament people and governing folks generally open their eyes and think what had to be done to better the state of the working classes. The members were, many of them, able, earnest men; but the schism caused by O'Connor's opposition weakened its influence, and the divisions in the Chartist ranks became more and more apparent. The old quarrel about moral and physical force consumed much time; so did that about O'Connor and the *Star*. Ernest Jones and Julian Harney were informed by Feargus that if they sat in the Assembly they must give up their appointments on the *Star*. Hard lines that, but no help for it. Ernest Jones threw up the *Star* and stuck to the Assembly, only to see it crumble away and perish. Harney renounced the Assembly and kept his berth on the newspaper.

On July 3, O'Connor brought forward, at last, his motion for the Charter in the

House of Commons, and got just fifteen M.P.'s to vote for it. After this he appears to have "coquetted," and something more, with the movement which Joseph Hume had started for household suffrage, triennial Parliaments, &c., after having for years denounced and driven from the agitation every man who on the slightest pretence could be accused of aiming at anything (even education) except the "Six Points."

"Here's something else to make you stare, Mr. Lovett," said I, one evening, when I found him shaking his head gloomily over the Chartist dissensions, and when I had just got the proof of O'Connor's conduct in that household suffrage business. "What do you say to this?" and I shall never forget to my dying day the look of scorn that came over his fine face as he read the facts. But the scorn soon passed, and then there followed such a look of sadness, and a sigh from the very depths of his heart. Poor William Lovett! Noble Lovett! you bore

the shame and sorrow of your class, if ever man did; but as all great leaders I fear have had to do, and will yet for many a day. But you didn't live in vain.

O'Connor's retribution, however, was fast coming, and as I want to have done with him, I'll just forestall one or two events, and mention here that soon after this time he publicly informed the Chartist body that he intended retiring into private life. Whether he really meant this, or wanted to get a general vote of renewed confidence, I can't say. But the result was crushing. Not a single locality sent a resolution to the *Star* on the subject. And though a third Convention was held in March, 1849, containing a number of first-rate men, and he was elected to it with G. J. Mantle by the Manchester Chartists, every one noticed how little influence he had in it, how seldom he came to its sittings, and how his whole appearance began to foretell that melancholy break-up of his mind which afterwards came upon him. Then followed the dis-



creditable exposures and bitter attacks on him connected with the gigantic delusion and even frauds of the land scheme, so that at last even his worst enemies might have felt pity for such a downfall and disgrace. And this reminds me I heard Mr. Fletcher or some one say once in the pulpit, that persons who think too much of themselves, and about themselves, from Nebuchadnezzar downwards, were always more liable than other folks to go off their heads. Queer, if it be so. But I've noticed it myself, more than once, and it certainly was so in regard to poor Feargus. He died in confinement not long after, and I've no doubt he was dealt with more mercifully afterwards than some of us would then have treated him, for *we* could not make fair allowances for him. But the evil that he did lived after him, as, I believe, Shakespeare says, and we felt it for many a day. And now I've done with him. High time. But before going back to the summer and autumn of 1848, I may as well mention that this third Convention

was distinguished by its taking up a number of important reforms required for the social improvement of the condition of the people.

“What do you think of this new convention, Mr. Rufford?” I remember asking him when I went one night to take tea with him at Greenwich, about three weeks after it had assembled.

“Think!” cried he. “Why, that it’s the most sensible creature that’s turned up for many a day. Look here, Jem! These lads are beginning to see the root of the evils the country suffers from, and that they must go for social improvements as well as for political rights. What a splendid programme they are getting out! Those ‘nine clauses’ of theirs embrace all the great fundamental changes required. But any good that comes in that direction we shall owe to noble Robert Owen.”

“The clauses are a move in the right direction. And though I don’t go with them all, myself, by a long shot, you know, it’s a great thing to have them fairly

trotted out, and held up for consideration. But don't you think there's a deeper bit of wisdom in this move than even what you mentioned?"

"May be. What is it?" said he, stopping a hunch of bread and butter on its way to his mouth.

"Why, I begin to see that political reform (which, as Lovett taught us long ago, is only a means to an end) is far more likely to be won when the people see certain definite advantages which are to come from it. Englishmen don't care for abstract propositions, I fancy, or changes of any sort, till they see the need of 'em."

"Right you are, my boy. (But, don't you see, my missus thinks you should take a bit more of her turn-over.) And I'll tell you another thing. The swells who hold the ribbons and tool us along with plenty of whip-cord sometimes, will be far more likely to give us good social reforms through having had the fright of these agitations and outbreaks."

“They’ll begin to see they must do *something*, you mean; and if we ask for what is reasonable, they’ll be glad enough to give it.”

“Right again. Two to you, old fellow.”

[I may as well give here the clauses just spoken of, to show how much more the leaders of the working classes were then thinking of particular social reforms than merely the points of the Charter. They seem to me now a curious mixture of folly and sense, and were as follows:—The nationalization of the land; the restoration of Common, Church, and Crown lands to the people, and the empowering the state to purchase other lands; the separation of Church and State; national, secular, gratuitous, and compulsory education; the right of co-operative societies to registration and enrolment; the State to open credit banks for associated bodies of working men; the right of the poor when out of work to employment; all taxes to be levied on land and accumulated property; the interest paid on the National Debt to be regarded as repayment of the capital; every citizen to be allowed military training; abolition of capital punishments.]

## CHAPTER XI.

I MUST now go back to the miserable work that was going on during the previous autumn of 1848, and which led to consequences more melancholy for those I loved, and so for me, than anything I had ever known before, or am likely, I hope, to know again. I keep putting off coming to it, for it was a dismal time.

My evenings during that autumn, I remember, were generally pretty well occupied in working with Lovett, Bembridge, Neesom, and the rest, at the National Hall, or, now and then, with teaching a young apprentice in our shop how to set out his work, &c. Sometimes I had a pleasant chat with Mr. and Mrs. Roberts (though not very often—they were so busy), and

also, as I have just said, with an old friend like Rufford. But on Saturday evenings I generally went to the "Sawyers' Arms" for an hour or two, to talk over the week's news.

One night, Davie, who was often with us, came in immensely excited, with several of his shopmates, called for his pint, but wouldn't sit down to drink it, and walked up and down fuming, till we made him tell us all about it.

"Well, it was this way. You know there was a meeting this afternoon on Clerkenwell Green? The bobbies were there, of course, and plenty of 'em—quite quiet and well-behaved, all except one, and he got hold of a couple of lads near me, who were only larking a little bit with each other, and handled them shamefully. Of course, I wouldn't stand that, and took their part. With that, he collars me, and crying out, 'I'll run *you* in, my boy, at all events,' he began shoving me along as if I were a football. A lot of my mates were going to upset him, but I cried to them not

to do that, but to come to the station-house, and get a sergeant, who had been looking on, to come with them. For I saw that the fellow had been drinking, and I thought the inspector, as well as the sergeant, would see it too; while if my pals had rescued me, the whole force would have been down on the lot of us." And he stopped to take breath, and a pull at the pewter.

"Aye, aye, go it, mate!" was the cry now, for we were all agog.

"So off we all went to the station, and there my fine gentleman was cross-questioned by the inspector, who looked at him pretty sternly from top to toe, when he smelt his breath, and then he questioned the sergeant (who gave his evidence rather reluctantly, but quite fairly), and finally ordered my enemy into the back yard with a flea in his ear, and sent us off to the bosom of our families and domestic joy at the 'Sawyers' Arms.'"

"Hip, hip, hip, hurrah!"

We were all as jolly as he at first, but after a bit I began to think—and I thought



this—"That fellow will watch Davie for a twelvemonth, and if ever he gets the chance, won't he be down upon him!"

The man had received a severe reprimand, it seems, for however occasional ill-behaviour may and must occur in so large a body of poorly-educated men as the force, I've long thought it admirably governed; and I must say the men are generally very useful and well-behaved, though, it seems to me, not half so civil in the City as in the Metropolitan force. The man in question, however, was an exception, and he certainly vowed vengeance. But there were worse men than he in Government pay, as time showed.

I've said there were stormy meetings going on thro' the summer of 1848 all over the country; and in June, Chartist and "Repeal" (Ireland) meetings were announced by huge placards very near home. In the London Fields, Clerkenwell Green, Homerton (where Victoria Park is now), Bethnal Green, and Bonner's Fields, large gatherings took place. I did not

go near them, but Davie was in a feverish way about them all.

One night he came rushing up the stairs where I lodged, and with an oath exclaiming, "Confound all blasted 'Peelers;' keep it dark, Jem!" he threw himself under my bed and lay as still as a mouse.

I locked the door in a jiffey, off with my clothes, out with my light, on with my night-shirt, and into bed before I heard the heavy tread on the stairs I was expecting. It stopped on the first floor, then a knock at front and back lodgers' doors, then a parley, then it came up to my door.

No answer, unless the gentleman could hear me snoring, and took that for one.

Knock, knock, knock again.

"Who's there?" from under the bed-clothes.

"Policeman X. Open the door."

Then I stumble to the door in the dark, upsetting a chair in the way, and rubbing very sleepy eyes. I open it and confront my Bobby.

“What’s the row? Rather late, my friend, to wake up a man who has to be at work by six to-morrow morning.”

“Sorry to disturb you, my man,” said the constable, evidently getting doubtful about the legality or wisdom of his proceedings; “but just let me throw a light into yer room,” and the bull’s-eye was unclosed.

“Nonsense,” said I, opening the door wide enough for him to put his head and lantern in, “what do you expect to see there? Come, be off; and don’t wake me up again in a hurry. Have you got a search-warrant?”

The man knew he hadn’t, and was satisfied by the look of the room that he had made a mistake; so with clumsy apologies he stumped downstairs again; but we heard him walking about for a long time.

I believe it was Davie’s friend; but of course we could not be certain. When I had made sure the coast was clear, Davie scuttled home as fast as he could, where

his wife was sitting up for him, and very unhappy.

Next day I heard that he had been at the great meeting on Clerkenwell Green; that the police had charged the people; that a scrimmage had taken place, and a good many heads been broken. Davie, of course, was in the thick of that work; "for," said he, "though I took nothing but a bit of crab-tree with me, and was determined not to join in any attack upon either troops or constables (in fact, I had promised Maggie I wouldn't), I couldn't keep my hands quiet when I saw those b—— peelers knocking the poor fellows about and cracking skulls like egg-shells."

"You mustn't go again, Davie," said I, "or you're safe for two years' imprisonment, perhaps transportation; and what are your poor wife and children to do then? Can't you see as plain as a pikestaff the people haven't the ghost of a chance against the government forces?"

Davie ground his teeth in silent rage.

"It is not like Paris."

“No,” he said, at length, “not a chance, until they are armed. But I can tell you, Jem, arms are to be had ; and Englishmen are as brave as Frenchmen.”

“True ; but not as well used to street-fighting. And if ever there comes a Frenchman, as hard, and cruel, and despotic as old Boney was, you’ll see French workmen once again made hay of in Paris streets, and the gutters choke full of their blood, and then their butcher ruling over ’em all.”

“I don’t believe it, Jem—not a bit of it. All we’ve got to do is to arm.”

Then, seeing the look on my face, he added fiercely,—

“What’s life worth, or home, or wife, or children, or any mortal thing, I should like to know, to slaves ? Am I to be working and eating and drinking in peace and comfort while thousands are starving, and the people are being crushed by this infernal despotism ? ”

What use was there in saying more to a benevolent hot-headed madman ?

As I turned away, very miserable, he said, "But I promise you one thing, Jem. I'll be tarnation close over it all, from this day forth. I'll be as crafty as a spy, and bilk the bloodthirsty hounds, depend on it."

That night we heard that Joseph Williams, Sharpe, Vernon, Fussell, and Ernest Jones were all in quod for seditious speeches at the meetings on Clerkenwell Green. They were all committed for trial.

In spite of this, another great meeting was called soon after, to be held in Bonner's Fields, but large forces were brought up to prevent it. Dr. McDouall was to preside. Immense multitudes were tramping towards the spot from all quarters. The women and children were kept away. Most of the men had got bludgeons, some had pikes. A cab rattled past. The Doctor was recognized by Davie and others who were waiting to receive him, and roaring cheers went up from many thousand throats. Way was made for the cab to the meeting ground; the Doctor was politely handed out of the cab by two constables, and

requested to confer with a military-looking man in dark blue uniform.

“You, sir, I presume, are ——” said Dr. McDouall, inquiringly.

“Captain ——, Assistant Commissioner of Police. I regret to inform you my orders are to disperse this meeting by force, and to arrest you, if you persist in holding it.”

Dr. McDouall and Captain —— exchanged bows. The Doctor mounted the top of his cab, and persuaded the angry and excited multitude to turn tail and march home again.

But the meetings went forward elsewhere. The Doctor (McDouall) was, of course, closely watched, and soon gave the authorities ground for arresting him, which was done at Ashton-under-Lyne not long after.

But Davie brought me with immense exultation an account of how, on Sunday, July 18, a great delegate meeting had been held at Blackstone Edge, when a resolution was passed, “That all movements for the



Charter had failed, in consequence of the Chartists opposing moral force to the physical force of their oppressors." I knew pretty well what would come next.

But it was the affray at Ashton, on August 14, when the policeman was shot, that chiefly sent a thrill of rage and terror through the governing classes, and, I suppose, made them think any measure justifiable to put down the rising spirit of insurrection ; while the leaders of the physical-force Chartists, and many of their followers, were getting equally unscrupulous and desperate. So the demand for pike-heads, daggers, pistols, ball-cartridges, &c., went briskly forward. And the Government, or at least the heads of the police, began to listen to the infamous proposals of the notorious Powell. Ah, well, poor Davie talked of being as crafty as a spy. More than one meant to be the same.

On the day when the meeting was dispersed in Bonner's Fields, a disreputable-looking beggar in a faded shooting-coat and leggings, was standing alongside a policeman

watching intently every man who seemed to be taking an active part in the day's proceedings. As Davie Roberts came up he noticed the policeman nudge his companion, and thought he heard him say, "That's the fellow." Looking carelessly round he recognized the man who had "run him in" a few weeks before, and saw too, the malicious smile on his face. But as McDouall came up soon after he thought no more of the matter, except a passing wish to have a fair set-to with the constable and knock him into next week. But if their chief showed the white feather what could a poor sub. do?

From a few words I overheard one night between Davie and some of his set, I feared they were now beginning preparations for arming in earnest, and so it proved.

The night after we had heard of the fatal business at Ashton I happened to have been kept very late at a lodge-meeting of our trade society over a row about a defaulting member. It was a dark, rainy night, and as I was passing through St.

James's Churchyard, Clerkenwell, I was startled by seeing three or four men crouching behind the gravestones. It was too dark to see what they were about, but as I thought they were grubbing in the earth the idea flashed on me that they must be body-snatchers, for I had heard plenty about those gentlemen when I was a lad. Looking round for a policeman, I put my hand to my mouth, and was just about to give him a whistle, when one of the men sprang over the railings and grasped my arm.

"Hush ! we're only putting away some ball-cartridges. The police ran us close. Keep it quiet, Jem."

"Davie ! Davie !" said I, all in a flutter, "I pray God you mayn't be sorry for this miserable folly to the last hour of your life."

"Pray God, Jem," said he sternly, "to smite down our tyrants, so that honest, peaceable working men mayn't have to risk their necks in getting justice done."

The other men had joined us by this

time, and as they all walked hastily away, Roberts added,—

“And pray God to give you a better heart, Jem. I guess you are but a selfish, sneaking humbug after all—afraid to risk anything for freedom.”

Now, I don't say it wasn't a bitter dose to have dirt like that thrown at me, though I knew he'd be sorry enough next morning he had said it. But we all used strong language now and then without meaning much by it. And I *did* sometimes think I was both cowardly and selfish in doing nothing but talk and teach lads grammar and geography, or what that noble-hearted man, William Ellis, called social economy; by way of delivering my fellow-countrymen from the grinding misery and injustice that was crushing the very life out of thousands of them. And, vexed as I was with Davie, I should have been base indeed, and unworthy of the friendship of a fellow like him, if I hadn't admired and honoured from the bottom of my heart his unselfish and most self-sacrificing efforts. But I couldn't

look at all the plans of him and his party except as a miserable mistake. I felt certain it was then, and I'm just as certain now. So, what could I do?

Three hundred ball-cartridges were found buried in the churchyard next day by a gravedigger—as might have been expected, his experienced eye telling him there was a disturbance of earth in which he had had no hand. The cartridges were taken with great trepidation by churchwardens, gravedigger, and police, to Scotland Yard, and the newspaper boys got hoarse with proclaiming the fearful discovery.

It was very soon, if I remember rightly, after McDouall's "upset" in Bonner's Fields, and before this "find" in St. James's churchyard, that I saw Davie as I passed the door of the Hall of Science one evening, talking to a rather spruce-looking journeyman carpenter, who was shaking Davie's hand with a deal of warmth, as if, said Davie, he had just picked him out of the Regent's Canal. I didn't like the man's face.

“Who’s that fellow, Davie?” said I, as he came along with me a little way.

“Oh, he’s a regular brick; knows Cuffey, Fay, Ritchie, and all our best men. He was at our meeting there to-night, and heard me speak; declared it was prime stuff, and the very thing he’d been wanting to hear for many a day. Told me where he worked in Leeds, but had just come to town. Said he must throw in his lot with us. Wanted to know what he could do to help, and gave me ten shillings towards the ‘Liberty Fund.’ I never saw a chap so pleased.”

“Oh, I know you can talk as well as you fight.”

“By George, he did butter me, I can tell you. I should rather have liked you and Maggie to have heard what he said.”

“Precious glad I didn’t. Do you believe all he says?”

“Why not? You say I can talk. Jem, you’re jealous! It’s very hard a man can’t have a little encouragement, once in a way, without one’s best friends damping it down.”

And he moved away.

“Davie, that’s a bad fellow; depend upon it. Did you look at his hand?”

“I’m not a fortune-teller.”

“Aye, but did you notice if it felt hard and horny like an honest man’s hand!”

“Can’t say I did; and, now you mention it, it did feel rather soft.”

“Something like you, Davie, I’m afraid.”

But he was in no mood for chaff, and didn’t like it.

I was getting rather anxious, too, about his position at the shop. His employers had threatened once or twice to discharge him for being so often away from his work and late in the mornings. They certainly would have done it, had he not been a very clever hand, and they had heavy jobs to complete. So I made one last appeal to him that night.

It was no use.

He declared, with much excitement, things would soon mend now, for they would go the right way to work presently.



I asked him what he was going to do with his new friend ?

“ Introduce him to-night at one of our meetings.”

“ Where ? ”

Davie was reluctant to tell me ; but at last whispered,—

“ At the Orange Tree, Orange Street.”

Then we parted.

## CHAPTER XII.

I WENT round by the Orange Tree before going home and had a glass. The place was full of all sorts—good, bad, and indifferent,—some very desperate-looking roughs, and some very respectable men of our Society. Cuffey and Fay, with other leading Chartists, were just going into an inner room. They welcomed me warmly, crying, “That’s right, my boy. We wanted you,” and two or three whispered, “Are you in for it too? It looks like business at last, don’t it?” I told them I knew nothing about what they were doing and didn’t want to. I only came to see if Roberts was there. They said rather surlily he would soon be there, and hoped he’d give me “a lift, right side uppermost.” So I waited a bit, for

I was getting more and more anxious for him. Presently he came in along with the man I had seen speaking to him. I noticed the fellow stood treat both for Davie and several others. Presently he edged towards the door, I gave Davie a sign and whispered him to keep close so that his friend shouldn't see him, but to keep his eye on him. The man sidled out of the door, and round the corner in a jiffy. I after him, Davie watching at the door. Just outside I met a brother chip of the name of Locke, and taking him by the button I began talking about some affair in our Trades' Union Lodge, but asked him to keep his ears open when we got round the corner. I soon spied the new convert with another man, as I expected, and we lounged past them talking of the lodge-meeting. Then I left my friend, he dawdled back again, and I went round by another way back to the Orange Tree. Locke was waiting for me on the door-step.

“Did you hear anything?” I whispered.

“ Yes. Call Davie Roberts out. Look sharp ! ”

When Davie came, he seemed rather bewildered, and said,—

“ I’ve just seen the blackguard.”

“ Who do you mean ? ”

“ Why that d—— policeman, that run me in ; he’s inside, in plain clothes.”

“ I thought so. And did you see your new friend with him ? ”

“ No, by George, or I’d have wrung his neck. They haven’t been near each other, I’ll swear.”

“ Oh, dear no, not at all. Davie, those two men were round the corner just now talking together as hard as they could. Locke and I saw them.” Roberts started. “ Just tell Davie what you heard.”

“ Well, I heard this, Davie Roberts. The policeman said, ‘ I saw him go in not ten minutes ago ; ’ and then the other chap said, ‘ Come inside, and put your finger on the fellow’s shoulder. I think he’s the same cove as brought me here ’—at least it sounded very like that ; but they talked

low. Then I walked on ; and soon after they came up to that door, and I followed them in. Then your Bobby works his way through the men round the bar, and I sees him put his finger on yer shoulder as plain as I see you now."

Roberts clapped his hand to his forehead, as if he'd been shot. I knew he'd think more of the warning, if another man than myself told him he was being sold. He looked in my face one minute with a sort of despairing wretchedness, like as I fancy men look when they are going to drown themselves. Then he whispered in a hoarse voice, "I must warn Cuffey and Fay ;" and was dashing off, when I caught his arm. "You will come back to me directly ?"

"Yes, yes ! Wait for me here a minute."

When he came back his forehead was covered with sweat. "It's no use," he said. "I've seen Cuffey, and they don't believe there's much in it, and they won't give up the meeting to-night, and I'll not

desert them. But they'll take care those two scoundrels are watched and kept out of it. Good reason too. Why that place and two more 'publics' are choke full of pikes, swords, loaded pistols, gunpowder, tow balls, and heaven knows what. We're all ready to begin, and everything will be settled to-night. But I don't like—" and he paused.

I got him to walk a little way with me up the street towards his home.

"Now look here, Davie," said I. "Can't you see your whole plot is known to the police. I'm as certain that villain who spoke to you is an informer as that we're standing here."

"I believe it, and I've told Cuffey and the rest all about it. But *they* won't believe it, as I told you just now. They only think I'm a coward, and if they're to be hung, I must swing with them."

"Very well, and I'll crack up your heroism over your grave. I'll be bound Mr. Fletcher will preach a splendid funeral sermon. . . . Davie Roberts, look here. I

do honour you more than I care to tell you, for the pluck and the unselfish public spirit with which you are going into this business. I believe I would do and risk as much, or more, myself, to get the Charter, if I thought it the right way—not half as much credit to me as to you, for I’ve neither wife nor child.” (“Poor Maggie, and the kids,” said Roberts, sadly, half to himself.) “And I would face *any* risk, or suffer any pain, I think, to help working men get the Charter by moral force, for then I know they would be prepared to use their power well when they got it. But, would to heaven that you could see that now you are leagued with all sorts of blackguards, and are stirring up all the filth and scoundrelism of London. . . . Think of the ruffians and thieves who’ll be in the thick of the row, ready to burn and plunder on the first chance. Remember the Potteries, and poor Burt. What good do you expect can come out of all that? . . . Davie, I know you’ve liked and trusted in Mr. Fletcher, haven’t you?” (He nodded



energetically.) “ And though you haven’t been to hear him often lately, *I* have ; and I see, as I never used to, that it’s no good getting men the franchise, or giving them power of any kind, unless so far as you help them to become unselfish or self-restrained, wise, and thoughtful. But, on my word, I believe thoroughly, now, that Mr. Fletcher is right in saying that nobody can make us unselfish but Christ. You don’t think he’s canting, I know, in saying that, or me for saying it after him, do you ? ”—[“ No, indeed.”]—“ because you know we are sincere. And you know, too ” (I hurried on, for I felt fidgety, as I always did if ever I got on these subjects, which wasn’t often ; but I had promised Mr. Fletcher I would take the first opportunity of saying it all, and I saw Davie listened with all his mind), “ you know that I don’t mean we must all believe this or that particular creed, but we must get Christ’s spirit and His help, and act on His precepts, if we are not to be cutting one another’s throats all round, or else giving ourselves up to

beastly living and greed for money, and so coming under a much worse tyranny, both without and within us, than your friends, or anybody else, ever fought to throw off. Look at the French workmen—are they any the better for their last revolution and all the bloodshed? Depend upon it, too, they haven't seen the worst of it yet. . . . But what's the good of talking? It's just this wretched selfishness and these bad passions, which we all have, that must be got under if we are to have any real freedom or peace, no matter what the Government be. And how are you to get unselfishness and self-restraint out of pikes and pistols?" . . . . I was "coming the parson" in this style, you see, partly because I knew the further I got him from the "Orange Tree," and the nearer home, the more chance there was of his not going back. At last he said,—

"Cromwell got freedom and peace out of pikes and gunpowder, at all events."

"No, he didn't. Mr. Fletcher was talking on that very point in his last lecture,

and he showed how shot and steel were of no use at all, even to Cromwell, for winning freedom, as long as he'd only got a lot of godless troopers and fellows with no principle in them. Don't you know it wasn't till he got his 'Bible army' together that he smote the Philistines? Didn't he say he must have 'God-fearing men who would make a conscience of it? How many of those men at the 'Orange Tree' to-night are either God-fearing or making a conscience of it? Remember this is not my chatter. It's Mr. Fletcher's."

I could see that Davie's generous heart was answering to these words, coming as they did a-top of his terrible discovery, about the spy who had been flattering and blarneying him. So, still slowly heading for Davie's lodgings, I went on talking.

"You see, Davie, that looking through history as well as I've been able to do while attending these lectures of Mr. Fletcher's on the history of Christianity, I can see that nations, and movements of all sorts in Christendom, have prospered for the last

eighteen centuries just so far as they really put their necks in Christ's harness, and lived under His yoke. . . . Christianity, in spite of the evil done by bad men in its name, seems to me to have been the chief 'liberator' of all who were oppressed, whether by their own vices and selfishness, or by the crime and selfishness of others. And it stands to reason it must be so, first because it is only from Christ we learn perfect self-denial, self-sacrifice, purity, and love. And secondly, because when we do know what we ought to do and to be, we want the strength and the will for doing and being it; and this also the best and noblest men and women, in all those ages, said they found by looking to Christ for it—said this was not to be found effectually and lastingly anywhere else. I believe they are right. I can't see in history, nor find in my own experience, anybody else who can deliver us from our selfishness and other sins. It is not so much, I fancy, that we don't know what's right. What we want is help to do it; and that we get

from Christ, and from no one else, as sure as God's in heaven and has given His Son to help us. It all seemed too good to be true, Davie, when I first heard Mr. Fletcher say it. But I know now, by trying it on, it *is* true, and you'll find it so, my boy. You don't think I'm canting?"

"No, no; not a bit! Cut on."

"I've just done. Only if, as Mr. Fletcher says and I believe, Christ's appearance in the world, and the power given to Him since His crucifixion, is God's way of mending the world, and raising us to goodness and happiness, we may be as certain that no other way will answer as that the sun will rise to-morrow morning, and that half-armed, undisciplined godless patriots are no match for artillery, trained troops, and Government spies."

"Curse them! a thousand times!" . . . And he clenched his fist, striking out fiercely. But soon the savage look on his face passed away—the brawny fist dropped at his side, and it was almost in a moaning way he said, as he stopped and faced me:—

“Jem, why did you never say all this before? It’s too late now—too late.”

“Never too late to mend while we live, Davie. If you feel what I say is true (and I know you do), you can get strength to act on it at once. But I know I ought to have spoken sooner. I wish to heaven I had. I’ve often wanted to, but you know how a fellow hates canting and setting himself up to preach, and what a deal is expected of him if he does. However, I promised Mr. Fletcher last Sunday night I would say something like this to you when I got a chance, and so I was looking out for it. But I hadn’t a notion you were so near the edge, or I’d have spoken at all costs, for I believe there’s nothing else would keep a man like you out of this mad devil’s business.”

We stood silent a minute, and then I remember I took his hand, and just said, for I couldn’t help it,—

“Dear old friend, you know we have been friends in rough weather and shine for many a day, in spite of our little tiffs

now and then. . . . Don't think I'm a coward, or that it's so much more brave and good of you to go on with this blood-and-thunder business than to come out of it; for I swear it's nothing but folly and treachery to your master, Christ, and to all working men. They need all you can do to lift them up and bring them to their true Deliverer, not to push them further into the old mischief-maker's hell-cauldron, and plunge in yourself. . . . Davie, for the sake of true Chartism, and our down-trodden brother workies—for your poor wife's sake—for the sake of Christ and God in heaven—let me ask you to leave all that miserable folly and wickedness behind, and go home."

Davie passed his hand over his eyes, turned away, stopped, came back, shook hands, just murmured,—

"Too late. . . . But God bless you, old friend. Go and see Maggie and cheer her up a bit. Good-night, and God bless you."

Then he went back as hard as he could



to Orange Street. I went home with a heart-ache.

When he got to the 'Orange Tree' the first man, he told me, whom he saw was Locke, standing on the door-step, and who, it seems, was on the look-out in case my friend should return. He came to meet him, saying, under his breath,—

"Be off, Roberts. Don't come here to-night. For heaven's sake don't go in, man, they'll murder you if you do."

But Davie only thanked him, put him aside, and pushed past the crowded bar, trying to go straight to the club-room where the committee were sitting. The moment he was recognized all the loud, eager talking ceased, and a murmur began to run through the place.

"Hullo, Roberts!" shouted one, "there's been a spy here!"

"Caught a spy here!" cried another. "What do you think of that, my boy?"

"No, by ——," cried a third, coming out of the committee-room, with more behind him, "they have not caught the

spy, but here's the sneak who rounded on us, and by the powers we'll pay him out!"

Then the whole lot closed in on Davie, who backed up against the wall and kept the foremost at arm's length by sheer strength and coolness. There he stood like a rock, not taller than many of them, but wonderfully strong and well-knit, as pale as a sheet, but perfectly cool, and even contemptuous. One big fellow grasped him by the collar, but he held the man's wrist as in a vice. There were a few there who not only believed like the rest that he had been betraying them, but who hated him because he was a good speaker, and sometimes a bit cocky, while others had long had a grudge against him because he was so popular with his songs and stories in any set he went amongst. Others again were bitter against him because he worked with Lovett at the National Hall. Their time for revenging themselves was come.

But I don't suppose the crowd of work-

men swaying backwards and forwards there was a bit worse than an average lot of such men as I have since known on 'Change, in Mincing Lane, in the Leeds' Cloth Hall, or on the Liverpool "Flags," had they found a man detected as they thought in a sneaking plot to blow some joint-stock company into the air in which they had largely invested, or if a spy had been caught secreted somewhere in the Stock Exchange. These men were a trifle more rough, perhaps, and more accustomed to use their hands, as well as to go direct at once to their purpose, without a thought for the consequences. But as far as vindictive fury and hatred might go, I believe it would be six of one and half-a-dozen of the other. Things were getting serious, however, inside that Orange Street "public" just then.

Davie had so far indeed kept them from rushing in upon him and dragging him down. But things could not remain in that state for more than a few minutes. Davie, at first, tried in vain to get a hearing,

for the committee-men and some of the most violent were mad to get at him, while Locke and a few others managed to help keep them back. But at last he raised his voice so loud that they began to listen.

“I’m no sneak, nor a traitor, and it’s you that should be ashamed of treating an old pal, who’s always been true to you, in this way. I tell you I believed that man who you say is a spy was as honest a man as any here” (“More fool you!”) “until an hour ago, when I heard what looked black; and I went straight to Mr. Cuffey and told him all I knew.”

“That’s true,” said Cuffey, emerging out of the club-room.

“Why didn’t you say so before, Cuffey?” cried several.

“Why, you fools,” shouted Cuffey, “how should I know what you were all jabbering about?”

Whereon Davie continued: “I went away then for a few minutes with Jem Woodford, one of Lovett’s men, because

he wanted me to go with him, and cut the whole concern here.”

Terrific groans, amid which a man named Ritchie called out,—

“And I suppose you told him all about our arsenal?”

“Joseph Ritchie!” said Davie (and Locke told us his voice was almost terrible to hear) “are you not an honest man yourself? How dare you say such a thing? You know I never breathed a word about the arms to the man—though if that blasted Government put me on the rack they’d never get anything out of me agen you—mind that mates! Now let me go.”

“Why did you bring the fellow here, then, at all?”

“Why did you ever bring any mortal Chartist here, yourself? I suppose it was because you thought they were honest men. When a fellow talks as he did, told me where he had worked in Leeds, said he wanted to cotton with us, and upset the Government, and gave me 10s. on the nail for the cause (which I handed over to Mr. Cuffey), how

was I to know he was an infernal scoundrel? But now, look you here, mates! I left Woodford and came back here to take my share of any danger or any fighting that might turn up to-night. Did that look like rounding on you? But if this is all the faith you have in me, I see I'm in the wrong place, and, if you'll allow me to pass, I wish you all good-night!"

Some called out, "All right, Davie's a good fellow; it's a shame to suspect him." Others cried, "Let the varmint go. We don't want any mealy-mouthed friends of Lovett's here, or of Lovett's friends."

But more than one fiercely shouted,—

"What, let him go and bring the red-coats down on us! Knock out the beggar's brains; curse him!"

"Nonsense," said both Cuffey and Fay. "He's all right. He's in a pet now, and no wonder. He'll be all right in the morning and stand by us like a man."

Then the crowd sullenly made way, and Davie elbowed his way out. But three or four men, among whom was Locke, who

knew where he lived, followed him secretly, till they saw he was going home, and not to the police-station.

Davie told me afterwards he never had so much trouble in all his life as to keep his fist from dashing into the face of the man who collared him; and that what I had been saying to him, a few minutes before, somehow helped him to keep quiet. But, if he had struck the man, he'd have been lynched to a dead certainty; and, before Locke, who was watching and ready to run, could have got a policeman, the poor fellow would have had the breath choked out of him, and Maggie would have been a widow.

I, little dreaming of the terrible danger he was in, had gone home and got my tea. It had just gone eight (I remembered the time, because I heard the chimes just as I was on the street-doorstep) when I went to his lodgings, hoping, though faintly, to find him there; and, if not, to cheer up his wife, as he asked me to do. I found her very nervous and irritable, keeping her boy



out of his bed for company, and the poor little man rubbing his eyes to keep awake and stop the tears. So I stayed and chatted a bit, and left her more comfortable.

What went on after Davie and I left the place was this. It seems that Powell (for it was that infamous spy himself who had deceived Davie) had been suspected, even through his disguise, while in the bar of the "Orange Tree" by some sharp-eyed chap. The policeman in plain clothes heard angry whispers, and made Powell move off. But suspicion once roused, another man who had seen him at Bow Street more than once, swore it was Powell, and then it was only by the policeman's humbugging a number of the Chartists, and swearing that the supposed spy was a refugee French workman from Paris, and by exerting all his strength, that he succeeded in getting the rascal safe outside. But as soon as they were clear off, Locke, who was a kind-hearted fellow, and didn't want to see the spy strangled under his nose, told the committee he had heard the man talking

English plainly enough an hour before, and that the other man had pointed out Davie Roberts to him in the crowd. That was quite enough, and while they congratulated themselves on having found him out (as they hoped, in time), every one began asking who had brought the villain among them. That also, as we have seen, became only too well known very soon.

## CHAPTER XIII.

WITHIN half an hour after Davie had left the "Orange Tree," Powell and his friend the policeman had disguised themselves in new dresses, and, got up now like bricklayers, had strolled back to Orange Street, where, by the corrupting power of five "bob" irresistible bribe to needy pot-boy, (who believed them to be merely inquisitive Chartists), they got admittance to the back-yard of the "Orange Tree," the boy meanwhile hiding in the dark in an old hogshead, within earshot. Once in the back-yard, it was not difficult for the policeman to stand on a dog-kennel, nor for Powell to stand on the policeman's shoulders, and thereby to peep between the curtain and the window-frame into the club-room, where the committee were sitting.

"Can you see 'em, Bill?" said the constable, according to the pot-boy's subsequent statement, when hard pressed.

"I should just think I can."

"Of course Roberts is among 'em."

"Can't see him—nowheres."

"Curse you, Bill; you *must* see him. It's catching him is all as I care about."

"Well, if I must, I must. Yes, of coorse. There the fellow is, smoking his pipe just agen the fireplace. Lor', yes. I should know him out of a thousand. It's him that speaks so pretty."

"All right. Can you hear anything?"

Dead silence for ten minutes. Policeman got uneasy. They changed places. Then both got down, and crept away as they had crept in.

"Think of that," said one. "Why, the house must be full of crackers and bombshells! Here's a pretty go."

"And a jolly good find," said the other.

Pot-boy began to be frightened, but dursn't blab to any one at first. But the two men, jumping into a cab, soon found themselves in Scotland Yard, quickly told

their tale, and in the course of an hour a dull, measured sound struck on the ears of the earnest and noisy talkers at the bar of the "Orange Tree," producing such a sudden silence that one of the committee-men came out from the club-room to see what was the matter.

All the men there that night—latest comers, of course, included—knew they ran some little risk by staying after the informer had been detected. But they were all growing desperate. They rather liked the excitement of a little danger, and moreover believed that as he had been discovered before any real business had begun, and of course knew nothing about the pikes and ball-cartridges, he couldn't do them any immediate harm. But his visit was a reason for hastening on the insurrection; and I believe it was resolved to pass round the word through London to get to work at sunset, the next night but one. Of that, however, I am not sure.

Just as the committee-man opened the door, he was startled by the sight of a

general helter-skelter rush to the half-open swing doors which let into the street, and the next minute he saw the hats and great coats of a column of policemen with drawn truncheons and cutlasses at their side, forcing their way through the crowd of fugitives. It was evident they didn't want any of that party, and they knew exactly where to go for the men they did want. Two or three of the committee escaped by the window at which Powell had listened, but the inspector was too quick for them, and had got a few men posted at the back to cut off their retreat. The one man of all others, however, whom one of the force did particularly want, he couldn't find; though, as he assured the inspector, "he saw him there with his own eyes not an hour before" (so he did), and "he was one of the dangerousest of 'em all." So a good deal of time was spent in searching both for Davie and the war-material. The latter was safely secured, but poor Davie was out of their clutches. Not, however, for long. A warrant was issued next day

for his apprehension, on the ground that he had been seen there shortly before, and must have escaped. At last the inspector said they must be off. It struck nine as the men, with the prisoners in their midst, waited in close column before the tavern for the word to "march." And the inspector noted the hour.

Davie and his wife had moved from Kentish Town lately, up to lodgings somewhere between Park Street, Camden Town, and Primrose Hill, that Maggie might more easily take the children on to the hill for fresh air now and then. As I was going up the street to their lodgings, I remembered afterwards seeing a girl waiting about in the shadow within sight of those lodgings, but took no particular notice of her. She had got her veil down, and was soon joined by a well-dressed man, who accosted her with a good deal of familiarity. It was pretty plain, however, his company wasn't welcome.

At last she exclaimed, seemingly in great distress, "Oh, do go away, Mr. ——." (I



didn't hear the name.) "I can't abear you."

"Why, so, my pretty?" replied the man, trying to take her hand. "You're quite respectable now, and fit company for any gentleman."

"For shame; I say I won't have nothing to do with you. You left me to my misery and shame, you did, you hell-fire sneak! and when I came and asked you for help to live an honest life, you sneered at my dress, and sent me away with a tizzy,—curse you! You're a bad, shabby lot, and I've done with you. There's another will be kinder than you, you d——d sneak."

It was only too clear what kind of company the poor wretch belonged to.

Then the man spoke rather low, but I was just passing, and heard him say, "You're a pretty sort of wench to preach to me."

"I'm not good for much, sir," cried the unfortunate creature in a passion; "but you're a deal worse!"

Then he put his hand on her shoulder.

She screamed, "Leave me alone, I say, or I'll call the police!"

Then I stopped and turned round. She flung off in one direction, and he in another, while I walked on. I had hardly been gone ten minutes when, it seems, the step that the girl had been expecting for the last half-hour sounded on the pavement, and Davie Roberts hove in sight. The girl came back, and crept towards him, taking away her veil. He stopped, and recognized her at once. If a few minutes before, any one had asked him whether, if he met Kitty Barber and she asked him to speak a word to her, he would break his word and talk and walk away with her, he would have indignantly denied that it was possible. Nay, if at that moment there had been any one at his elbow to remind him of his promise, I'm sure he would have turned away silently, and entered his home and sent his wife to see the girl and relieve her. But Davie's fatal weakness was his readiness to yield to the impulse of the moment. He never seemed to have enough—I don't

know exactly what it is, but I mean enough resistance in him—except when it was a question of outside tyranny and injustice in bodily shape. Then he was just—well, a hero.

“Oh, Davie,” said Kitty plaintively and timidly, “I’ve been waiting so long to see you. Let me just tell you—”

“What, Kitty Barber!”

“Yes. I couldn’t go away altogether without just one word from you. I’ve done all you told me, Davie, and kept my place; and I’ve saved a little money.”

She was dressed neatly, and had on a becoming little hat, and had got back some of her old good looks, and she seemed, too, so sweet and sad. Davie looked at her, first pityingly, then kindly and tenderly.

“Well, my poor girl, that’s right, and I’m glad of it.”

By this time she was leading him on out of the street towards Primrose Hill, but talking all the way in a low, earnest voice.

“Yes, I stayed quietly at the refuge, where you told me to go, till they let me

go to service, and there I had a hard, cruel mistress, and I was kept so close, and never a breath of fresh air or change of any sort. But I thought of what you had said to me, and I bore it as long as I could, till I couldn't stand it no longer"—(here she began to cry a little)—“and I came away, and I'm going to-morrow down to Manchester, where I'm to be well paid for going on the stage as a ballet-girl. But I couldn't go away without just a word from you. You arn't angry with me, Davie—are you?” and she looked up at him so sorrowfully, and the tears were in her eyes.

By this time they were a little way inside the palings of Primrose Hill. It was cloudy and dark. Just then, before he could answer, and when his whole heart was stirred within him, and old memories came thronging up, the angry face of his wife and her stinging words came up before him also. He seemed to be in a dream. Even then, though he had broken his word, and let himself be led away by the temptress—even then, if he had torn himself

from her, he would have been safe. His worst enemy could have made little handle of his walking and talking with the girl, wrong as it was, had he ended then and there by wishing her good-night, and promising that Maggie should write to her. But in the next moment he was awakened from his fancies by her whispering, eagerly, "Oh, Davie, Davie, give me one kiss before I go, and say you'll love me a little bit. I've loved you all my life;" and she flung her arms passionately round his neck.

"Love you!" said Davie, startled, and thrown off his balance, as he returned her kiss with warmth, holding her for an instant, as she whispered, "and you'll see me home now, dear, dear Davie?"

Once she really loved him. Now she acted it with as much heart as years of vice had left her. But she over-acted it, and the spell was broken. Without knowing all that Kitty Barber afterwards confessed—how this was the wicked end for which she had been long watching and working—how she thought if she could only get

Davie to her lodgings she might wile him away altogether from his wife, and get him to go down with her to Manchester—without clearly seeing all that gulf before him, and all the girl's purposes, Davie started back in horror at what he did see, and wrenching himself from her arms, he exclaimed,—

“No! no! Kitty, by —— this won't do! I've a wife at home. There, be off with you!” Then mentally ejaculating, “I'm an infernal blackguard!” he was swinging himself round to hurry away, when he found himself face to face with a man who made way for him with much politeness. To his intense dismay he heard the man's sneering laugh, and then words which made his blood chill. . . .

“Oh, ho! So you and Miss Kitty Puss-in-boots have made a match of it at last, have you? Come, come, don't be ashamed of it. I've seen it all, and, of course, you are going to take her under your protection now?”

“I don't know who you are, sir,” cried

Davie, for it was too dark to see each other's faces; "but you are making a big mistake, and, let me tell you, a most foolish one. You've only seen a kiss in the dark—"

"No, no, my boy," replied Mr. Haughton, for it was he who had stealthily followed Kitty and her friend, though he had lost sight of them for a time. He, indeed, had his own reasons for making out matters as bad as he could and a deal worse, but I think he really believed they were as bad as he said. "No, no, young gentleman, you don't get over me like that. But this is the way with all you young profligates! You get a girl's affections, as you call it, and then wash your hands of it, and leave her to the workhouse."

"It's all a foul lie, you fool, whoever you be—though I begin to guess all about you. Come, stand out of my way, or—"

The gentleman prudently removed himself a bit, but called after Davie, as he strode down the hill,—

"You don't humbug me, young fellow. I know what you've been up to." And



then he gave chase as well as he could in the darkness to the unhappy girl, who he found had fled from the scene while these words were being exchanged.

Davie gained his home panting and exhausted. His wife had been anxiously counting the hours for his return, and keeping a little supper (with which she had taken extra pains) hot for him. When nine o'clock struck, after I had left, and he didn't come, she became more and more unhappy, thinking some accident must have happened to him, or that there had been a row of some sort at the "Orange Tree;" and she kept fretting that she hadn't asked me to go down there with her. Then she began reproaching herself bitterly that she had spoken to him so angrily, as she told me she had done, when they last parted. I couldn't have gone with her, however, nor, indeed, have stayed with her any longer, as she begged me to do, and much as I wished, because one of the men of our lodge was very ill, and I had promised to sit up with him that night. So, when she

heard her husband's step on the stair, and he appeared at the door, she was trembling with excitement, and threw herself into his open arms with a little cry of joy. During the ten minutes it took Davie to reach his lodgings, the image of his wife in all her purity, and love, and beauty, had rushed in upon him with a force he had not felt for some time lately, sweeping away all traces of resentment; while the contrast between her wife-like trust and love and Kitty Barber's baseness, and what he felt to have been his own guilty weakness and momentary infidelity of heart, if not of actual conduct, quite unmanned him in his exhausted condition, and the tears came. Then the full fountains of her own penitent and passionate love for her husband were unlocked, and she tried to comfort him with the tenderest self-forgetfulness. It was a happy hour for them both, by the side of the cradle of their sleeping boy, after all their trouble. But Davie never uttered a word of having met Kitty. He would rather have died first.

Two days passed over, and Davie breathed freely. He thought all danger from the police for the "Orange Tree" business was over, as far as he was concerned, though at first both he and Maggie, as well as Mr. Fletcher and myself, were in mortal fear when we heard of the numerous arrests being made.

But on the morning of the third day, just as Davie was going to his shop, a strange-looking man in a billy-cock hat met him at the door, and handed him a letter directed to himself. Davie opened it at once, and then wondered much to find there was no writing inside; whereupon the strange man put his hand on his shoulder, and said, "You are my prisoner. Will you go quietly?"

It seems this was the device for making sure of the identity of the accused when arrested under a warrant. I knew more than one of my Chartist friends who were hooked in that way. The constable who had the grudge against Davie knew better than to put himself forward, so he got the

detective, who had gone with him to the "Orange Tree," to collar my unhappy friend.

At the examinations before the police magistrates, it was evident that things would be pressed very hard against nearly all the prisoners taken for their share in the proceedings in Orange Street, because, as it afterwards came out, evidence had been given of the existence of plots and conspiracies with wide-spread ramifications for upsetting the Government and establishing a Republic. In some cases, no doubt, these plots were fostered by spies and informers, eager for blood-money, but there certainly was a large amount of dangerous discontent and desire for a revolution among the poorer and working classes. So it was soon generally known that most of the accused stood a good chance of transportation if they could not prove they were somewhere else that day and night. The discovery of the ball-cartridges, &c., at the "Orange Tree" was a clencher. The Kennington Common donkeys were nowhere now in the race of revolution and folly.

Davie Roberts absolutely and persistently refused the help we all pressed upon him in the shape of a fee to an able barrister to defend him at the trial. He had resolved, he said, to defend himself. His wife implored him, with the tears streaming from her eyes, to take this last chance of rescue, but all to no purpose. We could not understand it. He knew what we didn't.

As I was taking leave of him in Newgate, he just whispered to me, "Yes, it's likely to be a bad job, Jem. What time did you call at my lodgings that night?"

"About eight o'clock," said I. We shook hands and parted. And Davie kept saying to himself, half the night, "Ah, then, if I had only kept my promise to Jem, I shouldn't be here now." It had struck eight o'clock, he well remembered, just before he met Kitty Barber; so if he had gone up to his rooms instead of talking with her he would have found me there, and both his wife and I could have proved his *alibi* at Bow Street that day. The evidence of the policeman and the spy

would have been discredited, and he would probably have been discharged. But both Kitty Barber and Mr. Haughton could have proved he was not in Orange Street. Wouldn't that have done?

## CHAPTER XIV.

THE day after the examination at Bow Street, a female asked and got leave to speak with Davie Roberts in Newgate, bail having been refused. When she removed a hood and shawl from her face, he saw, almost with loathing, it was Kitty Barber.

“I’m a deal more sorry to see you here, Davie, than may be you would think.”

“It was a wicked thing you wanted to do by me and my wife, the other night, Kitty Barber,” replied Davie sternly.

“Was it, then? Well, the men are tar-nation wicked towards us women,” retorted the girl, with a bitter little laugh. “So you needn’t wonder if the women are rather bad, now and then, towards the men. One good turn deserves another. But look



here. I'm come now to do *you* a good turn in real earnest. So make your mind easy ; you'll get off. I'm a-going to get Mr. Haughton (though I don't want to touch him with a pair of tongs), and I'm coming myself up to Bow Street next week, to prove what they call your *alibi*. No judge or jury can go agen that. I didn't know you were before the beaks yesterday, but I'll come next week."

"No, you will not," replied Davie quietly.

"What do you mean?" said she, almost fiercely.

"What I say. I defend myself, and I don't mean to put either you or Mr. Haughton in the witness-box."

Then Kitty broke out, sobbing hysterically, "You shan't prevent me, you shan't! I've broken my engagement in Manchester, and risked losing it altogether when I heard you was in *quod*, that I might stay in town and get you out of this blasted row."

"That was very good of you, Kitty Barber," replied Davie gently, "and I

shan't forget it. I hope God won't either. . . . But, don't you see? I'd rather be transported twice over than that my wife should know I went with you that night to Primrose Hill."

Kitty's eyes glittered.

"Ah, then I could cut you two fools clean apart any day if I liked."

Davie winced, for he saw what an ass he had been to speak as he had done ; and he felt sure now, as he had guessed before, why the girl wanted to give her evidence—to give it so that a final estrangement should take place between him and his wife. But by a great effort he controlled his agitation, and merely answered, "Not a bit of it. You can't play the devil's part there if you wished it ever so much, my girl. My wife would believe me sooner than you any day, I'm thinking. So you'd better go, Kitty." [His words were brave, but, in his heart, he knew his wife would never be the same to him again if she heard of that meeting, though she might try ever so hard.] "But if she or I could ever do

you any good we would, for all you've done us a deal of harm. So send Jem Woodford your address when you get to Manchester. He or Maggie will be glad to help you when I'm across the seas, if you really meant well by us. 'There, good-night.'

Then the wretched girl slunk away. She knew she had told a lie about not going to Manchester, but she really had an offer of employment at some theatre there, and risked losing it by staying on in London now.

One brief, bright gleam of sunshine shone out upon us during those dismal days, and I thought our troubles were ended. As I came out of the prison one day a boy was waiting to ask me if he could see "Muster Roberts," as he had "summut to tell him." Locke had brought him to the door, but couldn't wait any longer. But without an order that couldn't be managed; so then he told me he was pot-boy at the "Orange Tree," and wanted badly to tell my poor friend all he had heard when hid in his beer-barrel that fatal night. Of course I saw

Mr. Fletcher about it at once, and we both felt sure that now, at all events, Davie was safe. So I went home with a light heart, but wouldn't say anything to Maggie till we were certain, lest she should have sorrow on sorrow. Well for her I didn't. It was about as great a surprise and disappointment as I ever had in all my life, when I found Davie stubbornly refusing to let the boy be brought forward on the trial. We could none of us understand it, neither then nor afterwards; for there wasn't the same reason for not taking the boy's evidence as there was against letting Kitty and Mr. Haughton tell their tale. But I'm pretty certain, tho' Davie never would tell me, that he didn't feel safe, so to say, as long as that girl could get to see him, or could poison Maggie's mind against him, both of which things he felt sure she would try to do as long as they were all above ground and in the same land together. Better let the seas roll between them. There was a chance that, then, Kitty's lying tongue and bad, sore heart would be at rest—at least

as far as doing him or his poor wife mischief was concerned.

The trials came on at the Old Bailey, in due course, the following September. The villain Powell was the principal witness, and confessed to having stimulated the prisoners to buy arms, &c., in order to inform against them, and had "cast bullets for them!" When Davie's turn came, Powell swore to seeing the prisoner in the committee-room with the rest. The policeman proved Davie's presence at the Bonner's Fields meetings, and swore to having chased him after the fight there, but had lost the scent. He also swore to having tracked him to the "Orange Tree," and to seeing him with Cuffey, Fay, and the rest. Another witness put in the box by the counsel for the Crown, deposed to Roberts being an old offender, and gave the history of his connexion with the Newport rising, and his narrow escape then.

By the time Davie was called on for his witnesses and defence, he knew nothing could save him, but proving that between

eight and ten p.m. on the night when the committee were sitting at the "Orange Tree," and he was charged with being among them in the inner room, he had been on Primrose Hill in company with Kitty Barber and Mr. Haughton. However, he began by putting the policeman again in the witness-box, and making him confess he had taken him (Davie) unjustly to the station for the Clerkenwell Green business; and when the man denied that he had been severely reprimanded by the inspector, the sergeant, whom we had got to come to the court, confirmed the fact. This evidently cleared Davie in the minds of the judge and probably most of the jury (as was plain from the judge's summing-up), of the charge arising out of the Bonner's Fields meeting. But, of course, by far the most serious accusation against him was the "Orange Tree" business. On this point Davie said he had no witnesses to call, and no defence to make, but that which Hampden and Vane, Russell and Sidney, had made when they were charged

with high treason. He urged that his offence was not one whit greater than that for which they and many other noble patriots, whose shoes he wasn't worthy to unloose, were honoured and loved through all time by Englishmen of every class. He had long believed, he said, that it was both right and wise to resist a wicked and tyrannical Government by force, and quoted some grand lines beginning, "What were we if Brutus had not lived? He died in giving Rome liberty!" Then he went on saying,—

"True, he thought he had once learnt a lesson as to the folly and wickedness of using physical force even against a Government like ours (bad as it was) nine years before in Monmouthshire; but he had forgotten it since, under the accumulated tyranny of the existing Government. And, though it was false what the informer Powell had sworn to, about his being in the 'Orange Tree' committee-room, he should like to know what the Government and governing classes, who were trying to



crush down every attempt of working men to right their wrongs, were doing or going to do in a better way, or for better ends, themselves. If they didn't give the working men a fair chance of speaking by their representatives in Parliament, how could they wonder if those men who had a spark of patriotism in their breasts, and who had never been taught how to speak smoothly about great wrongs, occasionally forgot the proprieties, and talked or acted in a way he for one could not condemn, and which he thought deserved very merciful treatment in a time like the present, when even steady men's heads were turned wild with indignation." Davie wound up with an eloquent appeal to the judge and jury, in which there was just one faltering allusion to his innocent wife and child, which brought tears to some eyes, and his voice broke down for a moment. So, then, he rushed on for a moment with a force and eloquence that seemed to sweep us off our legs, and concluded amid vehement but quickly-suppressed applause.

The judge and jury, of course, heard him very patiently, but the summing-up would have been fatal to him, even if the jury hadn't made up their minds long before. Verdict, "guilty;" sentence, "seven years' transportation." Its announcement was followed by a woman's shriek, and a bustle in the court to get her into the fresh air. Maggie Roberts had fainted. But the "Orange Tree" lot, who had been in court or waiting outside, gave him round upon round of cheering as he came out to the prison-van, for they saw now how unjustly they had suspected him, and what a true, noble heart he had. He told me those cheers sang him to sleep many a night after that sad day. But they couldn't drown the sound of his wife's despairing shriek, which seemed to ring in his ears, he said, like a death-knell.

Yet the sentence was mild indeed compared with what Cuffey, Fay, Ritchie, Dowling, and Lacey got—viz., transportation for life ; and we attributed this difference partly to the appearance of a con-

spiracy having been got up against Davie by the policeman and Powell, and partly to the impression produced by his speech. Had he let Kitty and Mr. Haughton prove his *alibi*, and the pot-boy give his evidence, I suppose his acquittal must have been certain.

A day or two before Davie had to go on board the convict-ship at Woolwich, I saw he was labouring with something he bitterly wanted to say to me, and yet didn't like telling. So I led him on a little, and then, making me solemnly swear not to tell a soul without his leave, he let out all about meeting Kitty, and going with her to Primrose Hill.

I was startled, and at first fell into a furious rage; but I saw he had been saved from a terrible sin, and I calmed down. At last I got his leave to tell it all to Mr. Fletcher, under the same promise. Mr. Fletcher agreed with me that Davie was the strangest, most romantic fellow that ever was born; but he got a very influential legal friend of his (the man, in fact, who

had conducted the prosecution for the Government) to go with him to the Home Secretary, and, with Davie's reluctant leave, they laid the whole case before him. The great man listened patiently, and then said, "I daresay it may be all true, but I fear it's too late to do anything now. Do you wish me to communicate with the judge who tried your friend?"

"Oh, no, Sir George, thank you, very much," said Mr. Fletcher. "Roberts wouldn't have let us speak to you on the matter, if anything were to be said publicly about it. But we thought, perhaps, you could have a word said to the doctor who has charge of the convicts going out, and to the governor at Sydney, to the effect there was strong reason to believe Roberts was innocent of the charges against him, and so get him better treatment, and an early ticket-of-leave—"

The Secretary of State slightly smiled, and said, "No, I can't say anything about his probable innocence;" then added graciously, "but in consideration of the great

experience and legal acumen of my friend here, and the high character you give the man, I will do something to soften the prisoner's lot; and if his wife could join him out there, I'll take care matters are made as easy for him as the case admits."

In the meantime, I was taking Maggie and the children to Newgate for a farewell meeting with her husband, as he was to go to Woolwich that night. When I left them together, she, poor thing, was crying in his arms as if her heart was breaking, and he wasn't much better, and the poor little dears sat on the floor wondering. I came back before their time for parting was quite up (they were only allowed a quarter of an hour) because I thought, perhaps, if I got talking with the turnkey he mightn't notice how the time was going, and they'd have five minutes more. So I heard Maggie say, thro' her tears, as she was trying to bid her husband good-bye,—

"I know, Davie, I haven't always been a good wife to you—not as kind and loving as I wish—I mean I know I haven't always

kept my temper—but oh, my darling, it's drear work when the heart's aching, and the children crying, and but little money coming in. . . . But, Davie, I think sometimes of a bygone and better day. . . . Don't you remember, dear, that day you first took me to those tea-gardens . . . and the music, and how we came home by moonlight. . . . I think—I'm sure there'll be a happy time for us somewhere or other—by-and-by—a long while to wait, may be, but it *will* come—and then I shall be so good-tempered, and all your old love will come back to me."

"Maggie, Maggie, darling, don't 'ee break my heart. I love you now better than I've done in all my life before."

Then I could see her smile so beautifully, as she tried to put a brave face on it, while the turnkey moved away from me towards them, and I heard her say, in answer to something Davie had whispered, "Ah, but you see, I shan't trouble you much with my sharp tongue now for many a day. . . ."



And he answered, holding her hand to the last moment, and looking into her face, "Aye, aye, wife, if I could only be sure of hearing your dear voice scolding me every morning! Good-bye, good-bye! I've never been fit to hold a candle to you, Maggie; but God is good, and may be He'll bring us together again somewhere, when I've learnt all He's got to teach me."

"I'm as sure of that, Davie, as of our love for these little darlings."

And she pressed the youngest child to her heart, and the door closed on us, but not before he gave me a look and a farewell shake of the hand of that sort men don't forget.

I have never seen him again. . . . God bless thee, dear old friend!

Just before Davie left for Woolwich, Mr. Fletcher came with a bit of paper from the Secretary of State, and he told him the good news, such as it was, which he brought from that gentleman, though he and I both agreed it was better to say nothing about it to his wife till he was gone.



But it was worth a mighty deal to the unhappy man during all the sufferings, bodily and mental, of his sea voyage, for it kept hope alive, and was always something pleasant to think of in the darker hours, which were many. Aye ! the hope of his wife and children joining him—that meant a wonderful deal of comfort and peace.

Mr. Fletcher told me that as he parted with Davie, the poor fellow was very full of self-reproach when he was thanking him for all he said he had done for him ; and though he knew it was right for Davie to feel so, yet at last he couldn't help saying, " Nay, nay, my poor friend, don't think it's quite so bad. We all have our sins, and our punishment for them, too, thank God, and I believe, after all, you're a much better fellow than I am. I believe you did very wrong to go in for that conspiracy, but you did it from a pure and noble motive. You did what was far worse when you broke your promise, and went and talked with that poor outcast on Primrose Hill. But you are going across the sea to

save your wife the shame and agony of letting her and all the world believe you had been unfaithful to your marriage vows, and for that I honour you more than I can tell. Your soul, it may be, Davie, is whiter than mine. Your temptations and trials have been far greater than mine, and, according to your light, remember, you have worked and suffered nobly, and far more than I, to get justice and right for your fellow-countrymen. You'll be much nearer the throne, Davie, by-and-by than I shall, or many a man who scorns you now. Cheer up, and trust in God, my boy." Wasn't it like that man to talk so to poor Davie? And he meant every word he said.

## CHAPTER XV.

WHEN Mr. Fletcher told me all the Home Secretary had said, I told him I had already settled to take a passage for Maggie and her boy in a ship that was to sail soon after the convict-ship, if she were willing to go; but I thought it best for them both I should say nothing about it till he was gone. I added, I meant to take all her expenses on myself.

“You shan’t do that,” said he; “at least, I shall add about 40*l.*, which I am making up for them among my friends.”

The Defence Committee added 10*l.*, which they would have given to a barrister for Davie’s defence, and then I went to tell Maggie what we were doing for her, and that she might follow her husband as soon as she was ready. I shall never for-

get that evening. She was a good deal altered and broken down since the trial, and the boy had been very poorly. Her eyes were red and heavy, and her whole appearance sadly different from what it often used to be. She looked up as I entered the little room, and seemed pleased—as I think she always did—to see me.

“Have you seen him again, Jem?” said she; then added, “Well, I suppose I’ve had the last word and the last kiss for seven long years.” Then she sat down and covered her face with her apron. It seems she had never thought it was possible for her also to go out to Australia, and she only thought of convicts as working in gangs and chains, and never being allowed to see or speak to a friend.

Then I told her what the Home Secretary had said and done, and what Mr. Fletcher and I had arranged for her, and that she, too, might go to Sydney very soon.

“Oh, Jem, Jem—true-hearted brother!” was all she could say, and then she cried like a child, and threw her arms round my

neck, and gave me a kiss that repaid me for all, and it was many a day before I could bear the thought of having a kiss from any other woman.

Ah, she did look beautiful and good that night as she stood there—true wife as she was ; a blessing be with her wherever she may be ! As we stood for a second looking straight in each other's faces, I remember even now how the sun was shining in at their little window, and the brightness fell on some flowers in pots which Davie and I had given her. She was always fond of flowers and pretty colours ; and now the old days at Broadfield came back to me, when we all used to go gathering primroses and cowslips together.

One word in conclusion about poor Kitty Barber before I finish off what I have to say about my friends.

Davie had whispered to me, as I was bidding him good-bye for the last time, " I say, Jem, perhaps you'll see if you can do anything for that poor hussey—you know who. I told her to send you her

address at Manchester.” So I’ll just mention here that I spoke to Mr. Fletcher, and he wrote to a brother clergyman in Salford, who found her out, and gave as good an account of the girl, on the whole, as one would expect. I wrote now and again to her myself, and at first got fair answers. But I thought I had better run down myself and see her; so I got leave for a week, and went. She met me at the inn, as I asked her, with a queer mixture of satisfaction and shame; but there was something about her looks that gave me a deal of pain, and her breath stank of spirits. We walked up and down near the railway-station, in a bye-street.

“Yes, I’ve kep’ myself steady, Jem, you may depend on that,” said she. “A girl that has once been loved by Davie Roberts has no business with other men, though he was lagged like a felon. And I know he did love me once. P’raps it’s a mercy for *him* he wouldn’t have me, but it would have been a blessed thing for me. And I tell you I *hate* that vile, stuck-up thing

that got him away from me. Hasn't Old Nick got her safe down there yet?"

"Hush, hush, Kitty; don't talk like this. It'll do no good."

"But he did love me once—I know he did; and I mean to keep myself straight for his sake, and for that last kiss he gave me" (her voice broke down, and she sobbed a bit, poor thing). "But it is a dreary sort of life for me now, you know, Jem . . . devilish hard to bear I can tell you . . . and to keep straight. . . . For I've plenty of admirers, I can tell you. . . . But it won't be for long. . . . I've got an awful pain in my side now and then" (and she gasped for breath). . . . "But it's just like you to come all this way to see after me, and if I could give a blessing, Jem, I'd give it to you—only I'm more used to the other thing."

I said the best I could to her, which wasn't worth much, and shook hands and promised to see her once again before I left Manchester, and begged her to see Mr. Fletcher's friend as often as she could,



and to go to his church. She only shook her head very sorrowfully, and went away. But the very next night I met her quite drunk, and saw her carried off to the lock-up. The inspector told me they had had her a dozen times already, and she used to pray them to keep her there altogether, but of course they couldn't do that. She kept off the streets, but she had taken to drinking instead.

The next day I went to the Borough gaol with a kind lady the clergyman told me of. We found the prisoners were all just gone into the chapel, as the lady had been detained; but when I found that Thomas Wright, the celebrated "prisoner's friend," was going to address them, I asked leave to go in and hear him. A true friend to "prisoners" that man was, and we had a specimen of his power over them that day. He had gone up into the pulpit after the chaplain had read the service, and rose up to speak. The matron was just then speaking to the lady and me, so that we didn't catch his first words, but, looking

up, we saw almost all the women in tears. What can he have said, we wondered, to have such an effect on them so sudden? When we asked, we found that when he rose up and faced those galleries crowded with unhappy women of all ages, he was looking at them with that look of wonderful compassion on his countenance which I've never seen on any other human face; and then he just said, very quietly, "Oh, if your mothers could see you now!" There was scarcely a dry eye among them. Some of them were sobbing bitterly. Among them I noticed poor Kitty Barber. And that was the last I ever saw of her. She was taken from the chapel to the prison hospital, and the lady said I had better not go to see her again. She would look after her, which I know she did, like an angel of mercy. But the girl died in a few days. Poor little Puss-in-boots! If she had but had a good home and a mother to look after her. . . .

To return to those whose home she had helped to break up and make desolate.

Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher came down with Maggie and the two children to Gravesend when I went to see the dear souls off to the colony, about three or four weeks after the convict-ship had sailed. It was a great comfort to us that the parson and his kind lady came along with us, and it helped me to bear up and not make a fool of myself. But, do what I would, my thoughts were sad, and I couldn't cheer her up, nor the little darlings as I ought to have done, for I knew I should never look on her face again.

So they went sailing away over the seas—husband and wife—not together—yet the one not very far behind the other; so that before Davie had been working on the roads in the colony a month, one evening he found himself in the governor's office face to face with his wife, the wife whom, when he last parted from her, he hadn't expected to see again for seven years. I was told it was a strangely sad yet joyful meeting, for when he clasped her to his

breast she felt the irons on his wrists, while the cropped hair and rough smock also told their tale.

But the governor, in a stately way, gave them comfort. Davie was to be taken off the roads and put to carpentering, and in a few months, if he continued to behave as he had been doing, and if his wife could keep a couple of rooms and do some of the prison washing, Davie might be allowed to live with her outside the prison, and in a couple of years he might get his ticket-of-leave.

So there was a deal more joy for the two aching hearts than sorrow in that meeting. And then, when they met again and could sit down together by themselves, Davie told his wife all about his meeting Kitty Barber that night, adding, "I knew how she would put it, and what she wanted you to believe, and I knew how Mr. Haughton would have made it all seem true, and I thought it would half, perhaps quite, kill you, and that perhaps you wouldn't believe me, Maggie, when I told you how it really

was ; and so you see I thought it better to come out here, than that you should believe I had been false to you, darling."

Then she looked at him, but couldn't speak at first. When she could, he told me she just whispered, "But it was all false what she and Mr. Haughton would have said, Davie?"

"False as the father of lies, my own wife, or I never, never could have spoken to you again."

"And you mean you let them send you out here rather than give me the shame and pain of thinking you had played me false?"

"That's about the size of it, my Maggie."

"Well, I think it would have killed me if I had believed them, for I shouldn't have rightly known whether I was on earth or in hell. Davie, we both have our faults, and One above knows they have cost us dear, but you have done what seems to me a grand thing. I can't give you a crown in heaven for it, dear ; but perhaps some One else may. And I can do this."

Then she knelt on one knee, and took his hand and laid her cheek against it, and said, "I'll try my best to be a good and loving wife to you, Davie, with God's help, all our days."

"Dear, dear wife, pray for me that I may be a good and true husband to you, and worthy of all you've done for me, and of what you think about me. But I'm not worthy now, Maggie. If I ever am, it will be your and Jem's doing."

I had many capital letters from them in after-days, when he was free to go where he liked. In one of them Maggie writes:—

"And oh, you would like to see us, dear old Jem, as we are having our supper under the trees at sunset, with the children tumbling about on the grass-plat. . . . We've nothing to wish for, if only our lost lamb and dear, dear Nelly were here, instead of their being saints in heaven. But Nelly has found out our own little darling up there by this time, and I know they are good company. But I would like poor Jem Burt to have her company here on earth.

Ah! well, there must be a skeleton in every house. . . 'No,' says Davie, when I read him that, 'it's a schoolmaster, not a skeleton.' So I'll try and learn all my schoolmaster's lessons as fast as I can, and then, Mr. Woodford (I ought to mister you now, I suppose, that you've become such a big man, but I won't), we have such beautiful flowers . . . and then the music—ah! it *is* lovely. Well, then, too, we've got a first-rate parson, almost as good as Mr. Fletcher. . . . And do you know, Jem, I'm *never* out of temper now (except when the butter won't come), and Davie says I make a splendid dairy-woman and a tip-top wife, and am as saucy as ever I can be. So, no wonder if I'm the admiration of all the colony. There! that naughty boy came and looked over my shoulder, and would write those last words himself. But, of course, what he says is all quite true; and I may add, that if ever I get in a passion with him, and he calls me 'Peggy,' it tames me at once. So, having it all his own way, with nothing to vex him, he is



such a good boy, and he's becoming quite 'a leading politician,' and will be in the House some time, as sure as Christmas-day comes here at Midsummer; for I can tell you he takes large building jobs, and talks at meetings, and the folks here do think a lot of him, and there's none can talk him down; and he bids me tell you he preaches 'Lovett' to them, so that good man didn't live for naught, but will help the New World on as well as the Old. Oh, we are so good and happy out here, now, you can't think. Of course we have our troubles, but nothing to fret about. God has been very good to us, and you may believe we thank Him for it. And you'll believe, too, dear old friend, how we thank you, too, and love you, and think of you every day of our lives, and we do hope to hear some day that you've got a very happy home and dear little wife of your own. God bless you, Jem. Good-bye.—Your loving sister,  
MAGGIE."

There, I thought that letter was worth

keeping. And so it was—all yellow and faded as it is now.

In a letter from Davie himself, he writes in just as good spirits, and said he'd been to see "brave Jem Burt," who had got his ticket, and was working pretty cheerfully up in the bush; but Jem wanted to come and live near Maggie and himself. He had also seen Frost and Jones, and hoped by-and-by to see Williams. They were all pretty well.

The old original Chartist movement had at length collapsed, and with the exception of Lovett's admirable education work at the National Hall (though that, too, was stopped for want of funds, unhappily, not very long after), it seemed to have left little fruit. But its lessons had sunk deep into the hearts of a few generous, Christian-minded men, foremost among whom were the Rev. F. D. Maurice, Rev. Fred. Robertson, Rev. Charles Kingsley, Thomas Hughes, J. M. Ludlow, and others. Mr. Kingsley's noble volumes, "Alton Locke," Mr. Maurice's (as I think) still finer "Learning

and Working," and the "Christian Socialist" movement, with the Working Men's College in Great Ormond Street, were all valuable and most beneficent results of the work in which so many of us hard-handed, and often thick-headed, workies had been doing our best, often blindly, foolishly, even savagely, but still earnestly and faithfully, according to our light, and moved thereto—at least, I think so—by the best of motives, viz., sympathy with the sufferings of others, hatred of oppression, and a thirst for the rights of freemen. It certainly was not all in vain; for, besides the benevolent labours of the men I have just mentioned, there can, I think, be no doubt that, as Rufford said it would be, the governing classes took a deal more pains to amend the laws affecting our social condition and rights as working men, and to legislate in favour of the extension of social improvements, in consequence of this ten years' Chartist agitation, which cost many of its promoters so dear. I believe one effect of those three clergymen's work, also,

has been to do for a good many working men what Mr. Fletcher did for me and others long before, i. e., showed them there might be a deal of good *in* a parson, and be done *by* him. But, since they began working, there have been many of the cloth following in their wake, and brave, good men they seem to me to be.

Richard Moore, who had been one of the original twelve that first launched the People's Charter, continued a staunch worker in the moral force and educational movement to the last. He was one of the foremost leaders in the Free Press agitation, and was chairman of the Society for the Repeal of the Taxes on Knowledge.

True-hearted Bembridge, too, worked on in the same way till his last illness, and among his other good works was a great struggle (in which, at last, the publicans beat him) to get a Free Public Library for Marylebone. He was also one of the chief organizers of the workmen's demonstration on Primrose Hill in celebration of the tercentenary of Shakespeare's birth, when

none of the upper class folks would take any notice of the day—in London, at least. Honour to the memory of these men, and many like them !

After the Roberts' were off to the new world, I got my father and mother to leave Broadfield, for he was growing too old for the work at Broadfield Hall, besides much of it being rough work out of doors ; and I didn't at all like going to the old scenes. So I coaxed him and mother to come to a nice little place I took for them in Kentish Town, where mother could still look on green trees, and where I fitted up a small workshop for father, as I knew he'd be a deal happier for working a bit, as long as he had the strength for it. I opened a sort of technical class there on winter nights for youngsters, which amused him very much. Maggie's mother had been out of all her troubles in this world (and I hope in a much better one) some months before the trial, and the good aunt at Galleywood, who had no children of her own, had persuaded her husband, moved thereto

by Maggie's sorrowing appeal, to let her take the two youngest children and bring them up at the farm. The other two were earning their own living; and the father went muddling on till he could scrape the roads no longer, and died in the work-house.

And now years have passed away, and I have a happy home of my own, and a dear good wife, and some little darlings, and we are all as merry together as kittens at play.

Mr. Fletcher married us, and christened our pets, and I hoped he would have prayed at my dying bed and over my grave. But that was not to be. He worked too hard and loved too much to last. But he's better and happier where he is.

I have now become an employer in a pretty large business, but I haven't forgot the days when I was a journeyman, and I believe I've tried to do what little I could as an employer to help journeymen and apprentices according to what I should have liked masters and foremen to have done for me. You may sometimes see

journeymen, when they become employers, as I think I said somewhere before, act the tyrant worse than any who have always been what's called gentlemen. But then, again, I've seen workmen turn against an employer who has done all he possibly could for them (sometimes doing it at his own cost), and treat him shamefully. There are faults to be mended on both sides, and sometimes, I think, we want a whipping all round.

But, then, there's a deal to be done, also, it strikes me, as to mending the political machine. Looking back, and after thinking of our Chartist days, I can see, or fancy I see, how politics have got to do with most of our troubles, apart from moral or religious matters; and that's why, among other lesser reasons, I've written what my friend has made into this tale. Noble-hearted Lovett has been taken to his rest since I began writing about him. His faithful and worthy ally, Bembridge, sleeps in Kensal Green Cemetery, after having helped more than one clergy-



man to see that they must try to establish the kingdom of God on earth, and not merely prepare men for it, as they say, in heaven. Many other of Lovett's best supporters have also passed away; and I wanted English workmen to let me help *them* to remember some of the lessons which the labours and sufferings, failures and successes of all these true patriots should teach us.

Brother working men, let me ask you, as the last word I shall write, to beware of selfish, unscrupulous leaders, and their thick-and-thin supporters. Many years' experience have told me (though, as I have not much book learning, I may be wrong) that nothing keeps the world back so much as jealousy and back-biting among leading men and their partisans. I don't think the devil does half so much harm by his straight-going sinners, as by his sneaking, backbiting jealous saints. There are always plenty of good folks trying to remedy wrongs; and they would soon do it if they didn't quarrel, and envy, and hate one

another as they seem to do. It is all these dirty tricks which strike down the good men and true, who ought to be leading the way, and give unworthy men power to do mischief or hinder good. I saw it said somewhere, once, that "half the time of the wise is spent in correcting the errors of the good," which may be very true, and shows how careful politicians, philanthropists, clergymen, and everybody else ought to be, not only to desire to be of use, but to learn the best way of being so. But I'm quite sure half the strength of both wise and good is lost in resisting the egotism, ambition, and envy of those who get the credit of being honest and able, when they're neither.

So that's the moral I learnt from the Chartist movement as it went on forty years ago in this old England of ours. And I hope and pray my hard-handed, and warm-hearted, and often long-headed brothers of the journeymen class won't let the labours, and sufferings, and failures of the great true-hearted chiefs of that

movement, nor the errors and sins of those who ruined it, be altogether forgotten. Heaven help us all, say I, to know and to follow those only who are worthy to be our leaders, and Him most of all who, by self-sacrifice, showed us what a leader should be.

THE END



## APPENDIX A.

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### AN ORIGINAL LETTER BY THE LATE WILLIAM LOVETT.

183, Tottenham Court Road,  
Oct. 10th, 1841.

DEAR SIR,—Having been very busy preparing our rules for publication, and with other matters connected with the formation of our Society, I have been obliged to delay the answering of your kind letter till now. I am glad to perceive that you are now, with us, convinced of the necessity of “Universal Suffrage,” though from a portion of your letter you do not seem inclined to assist us in the agitation for the People’s Charter as a whole, and this arising in my opinion from an erroneous notion which you, in common with others, entertain respecting the last five points, as they have been called. I will now, however, as briefly as possible, lay before you my own views on the subject, so that, on comparing them with yours, your judgment will decide on the respective weight of the arguments on both sides. In the People’s Charter I recognize an efficient means for securing a great end, *just and equal legislation*. This

end you admit cannot be secured under the present suffrage, as the selfish interests which class representation engenders, joined to the overbearing power which our aristocracy are enabled to possess on account of its limitation, will ever cause the House of Commons to be the mere mouth-piece of wealth and rank, rather than that of the whole people. Then, to remedy this, you will say with me, extend the suffrage as is proposed by the Charter. But, I reply, something more is necessary to secure the good end, namely, *just and equal legislation*. Of what use is the giving me the vote and the freedom of choice if I can only choose rich men?—if I cannot be allowed to choose those legislators who will honestly represent my views and interests? The mere *power* of voting would therefore be useless, and a mere mockery, unless the present *property qualifications* are abolished—one of the points which you consider non-essential, or, to use your own language, “not involving the great principles of right and justice.” It seems to me to involve both; it has been likened to the mockery of giving universal suffrage to the sparrows with the object of choosing birds to watch over their interests, but restricting them so that they could only choose hawks. Need I say much to a man of your judgment to show you that equally strong reasons could be urged in favour of the *ballot*, another of those points? Is it not equally a mockery, a cruelty, to give a workman, a shopkeeper, or a householder a vote, and not protect him so that he can give his vote conscientiously? Regarding *equal representation*, another point of the Charter, is it not equally opposed, and does it not essentially mar all *just and equal legislation* when a little rotten place like Thetford, containing about 160 voters, sends two

members to Parliament to nullify the votes of the two members sent by such a place as Westminster, in which there are upwards of 13,000 voters? Let us suppose we had universal suffrage without equal representation, and see how it would operate by taking ten small boroughs and ten large ones.

Harwich has ...	1,032	males above 21 ...	Westminster has	48,600
Thetford .....	831	„	Liverpool .....	46,320
Chippenham ...	1,253	„	Finsbury .....	53,962
Andover .....	1,191	„	Bristol .....	24,041
Marlborough ...	1,006	„	Tower Hamlets	72,604
Totness .....	800	„	Manchester .....	44,880
Knaresborough	1,501	„	Marylebone ...	56,231
Richmond .....	1,133	„	Southwark .....	32,188
Tavistock .....	1,345	„	Leeds .....	29,615
Huntingdon ...	1,299	„	Hull .....	11,935
	11,391			420,376

Return 20 Members.

Return 20 Members.

This has been calculated from the census before last, not having the last to refer to; but similar results would be seen by the last.

Now you see that the votes of 420,376 would be neutralized or nullified by those of 11,391 persons; and if the whole of the united kingdom was dissected in the same manner similar results would be seen. In all those, as well as in other small places, the influence of wealth and power is great, and corruption is notorious among them—hence I conclude that, without equal representation, the political good derived by the majority would be prevented by the corruptions of the minority, so that *just and equal legislation*, the great object of our Charter, could not be obtained. The next point, *payment of members*, I consider equally essential, for without this we could not have freedom of choice—we should still be obliged to choose *rich* men, or persons who could afford to spend three or four hundred a year, as members of Parliament, which poor men could not do. And we should remember that rich men are not always rich in thought, and in those qualities fitting for legisla-



tion. Many persons who are now fagging in the counting-house, toiling for the Press, or in some way to obtain a livelihood, would be soon the lights of the Senate House, if members of Parliament were paid for their services, as servants of the people ought to be. *Annual Parliaments*, though not equally essential, are necessary in order to enable the people to correct their mistakes as speedily as possible; for I think they would make many mistakes at first, in choosing persons of great promises and blustering pretensions, whose inefficiency would speedily be seen when they came to be tested by the common-sense of honest men met for a glorious object. It is because I wish to see the House of Commons speedily purged and purified of such persons that I am an advocate of *annual Parliaments*. The argument of learning their duties amounts to nothing—common-sense, and, above all, common honesty, are the great essentials for a legislator, and a great deal of the forms and ceremonies, now thought important, would be swept away, if we had an honest House of Commons.

In this hasty and imperfectly-written letter I have endeavoured to show you that *all the points* of the Charter are essential to *the great end*, and, being so, cannot in any way be considered *party* politics; for surely those cannot be considered party questions which have reference to the *equal rights of all*. But then it may be urged Chartism is very unpopular among a large class of persons, and we shall have greater difficulty in getting those along with us if we adopt the Charter as a whole than if we contended for a part only, that of the suffrage. I think there is great error in this, for taking the middle-class of the United Kingdom (and not those of one locality

only), we shall find that universal suffrage is the most obnoxious point with them ; let us get them over this, and be assured we shall have little difficulty in getting them with us for the whole. But shall we give up what we believe to be necessary for the accomplishment of our great object, because violent and foolish men have rendered it unpopular ? As well might Christians desire to give up their name or drop their creed, because violent, intolerant, and persecuting persons have assumed the name, as we Chartists to give up our name, or any portion of our principles, because fools and madmen have declared themselves to be the high priests of Chartism. No, let us rather, by our actions, prove that our principles are just and our object worthy of support, so that good men cannot much longer fail to appreciate them, and bad men, if not now convicted of their folly, will sink into the insignificance they deserve. I would urge you therefore to investigate still further the Charter *as a whole*, and if eventually you think with me that all its points are essential to good government, you will with me be resolved to support it through good report and evil, and through every kind of persecution that the enemies above us and below us think proper to inflict. You will then use your talents and your influence to propagate its principles throughout society, and to show to your fellow-men the necessity of uniting in every just and peaceful manner to make it the law of the land, through the instrumentality of which peace, happiness, and harmony may be made to supersede war, oppression, misery, and crime. An address from you embracing these views, and at the same time condemnatory of the violence and folly we all lament, would do incalculable good, and both Mr. Hethering-

ton and myself would feel honoured in seeking to obtain for it any publicity in our power. In a short time I hope to be able to send you copies of our laws, by which you will see that we contemplate something of your idea of an annual conference. Hoping we shall have your able assistance in forwarding the objects of the National Association in your town, I remain, yours faithfully,

WM. LOVETT.

Rev. Henry Solly,  
Yeovil.

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## APPENDIX B.

SINCE the foregoing "recollections" were written, a friend has reminded me of the very interesting scene which took place, during the height of the Chartist agitation, in the market-place at Nottingham, when the late Sir Charles Napier, the hero of Scinde, was sent down with a strong body of troops to that town to preserve order. Large and excited crowds were constantly parading the streets, and a collision between the troops and the people seemed inevitable, when Sir Charles, having mounted a waggon in full uniform, addressed them in a speech so telling, and yet so kindly and sympathetic, that from that time the danger of a fight was over. He told them how earnestly he desired to see their real grievances redressed, but he also told them what he had witnessed of the horrors of war, entreating them to look to

other means than bloodshed for obtaining what they desired, and not to place him and his men in the terrible position of having to cut down their own countrymen in the midst of their homes and their families. An eye-witness described the whole scene as one of the most affecting he had ever witnessed. The people cheered the old warrior enthusiastically, and quietly dispersed.

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